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ITS TRUE DEFINITION

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Addresses delivered at the Sixty-first Annual Conference of the Evangelical Alliance

PREFACE

THE addresses in this volume are fitted, I believe, to render valuable help in calling attention to some cardinal principles of Evangelical Truth respecting the Church of Christ and its office. There is a tendency at the present time to concentrate attention on the external aspects of the Church, and on its relation to social and economic problems. As long as it was under the guidance of Apostles and Apostolic men, such questions received only secondary and indirect attention. The work of its Ministers was concentrated on the salvation of men's souls, on their deliverance from sin, here and hereafter, by faith in Christ and in His Sacrifice, and on the purification of their souls by the Holy Spirit. These addresses are a call by evangelical Pastors to revert to that spiritual ministry, and to rely on the Scriptures, as God's Word, in this spiritual work. As in any other collection of addresses by various minds, there may be some divergences of view, and there may be points to which some persons (myself among them) might take exception. But these points of detail are of slight consequence compared with the cardinal princi-

ples which are proclaimed, and which are urged home with a fervour and a force which are deeply impressive. The Evangelical Alliance renders an invaluable service in uniting men of various Communions in the reassertion of these cardinal truths and obligations of the Gospel, and I gladly comply with the request of its Council that I would commend this volume to wide attention and earnest meditation.

HENRY WACE.

THE DEANERY,
CANTERBURY, *November* 1908.

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THE CHURCH OF CHRIST

Its True Definition

By the Rev. Hubert Brooke, M.A.

THE CHURCH OF CHRIST

Its True Definition

IT is important to define a word if you are going to talk about it. Two men were sitting in a train opposite one another, and began to speak about the things of God and religion, when one of them several times made use of the word *Church*—" The Church says this, and the Church teaches that." Presently the other man said, " There are five scriptural uses of the word *Church*; in which of these are you employing it ? " The conversation ceased then, because the man to whom the question was put did not know what they were. So, if we are to reason and talk over some topic like this, the use of the word *Church*, it is important that we have a clear understanding with one another, that we define what we mean by the word. It is profitable for clear thinking in our own minds, and for clear expression to others, that we should know exactly what we mean in speaking about " the Church."

The word *Church* (Gr. *ecclesia*, the calling out) is a word used in the Acts of the Apostles twenty-four times. Twenty times it is used of the Church in this dispensation; once of the Church in the Old Testament times, the Church in the Wilderness; three times it is used of an ordinary political assembly

—" It shall be settled in the lawful assembly," said the town clerk of Ephesus. In each case the underlying thought is that of *calling out*—the purpose for which men are called out defines the exact meaning of the word at the time it is used. In the New Testament pages we find the word *Church* used, as that railway traveller suggested, with five, or, possibly, only four different meanings — there is a little uncertainty about the fifth. We will first examine these four or five uses of this word *Church*.

In the first place, the *Church* is used to describe the whole body of real living Christians in the past, in the present, and in the future; the whole company, through all times, that are really one in Christ Jesus. When our Lord, for example, said, " Upon this rock," of Peter's confession, " will I build My church," we see, in one moment, that He means all that ever were, and all that ever shall be, brought to Him and built upon Him as the subject of the soul's confession and trust. So, in that sense, you find in the Epistle to the Ephesians that the word is continually used. Eph. i. 22: " The church which is His body, the fulness of Him that filleth all in all." That cannot be explained absolutely and accurately unless it includes every single soul that ever has really and truly trusted in and belonged to Him. Eph. iii. 10: " To the intent that now unto the principalities and the powers in the heavenly places might be made known through the church the manifold wisdom of God, according to the eternal purpose which He purposed in Christ Jesus." Again, " I speak concerning Christ and His Church." That, then, is the first and fullest inner meaning of the word, just as in

Heb. xii. 22: "Ye are come unto Mount Zion, and unto the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, and to an innumerable company of angels, to the general assembly and church of the firstborn."

There is a second quite definite and distinct use of the word, when it is applied to the whole body of professing believers in Christ at any one time in the world. Not to use many references, I will just suggest one, where Paul, writing in 1 Cor. x. 32, bids them "give no occasion of stumbling, neither to Jews, nor to Greeks, nor to the church of God." You see there, at any rate, the whole people living at one time in the world are divided into three classes: the Jews, God's ancient people Israel, still in blindness, not recognising Christ as their Messiah; the Gentiles, outside the old Jewish dispensation, not having yet received Christ; then the Church of God. And if you must include in that phrase every one excluded from the other two, it can only mean the whole body of professed Christian people living at any one time in the world.

In the third place, you find the word *Church* applied to all professed Christian people in any one city, or town, or district. In this sense you will find the word often used in the plural, as when the Apostle Paul said (1 Cor. xi. 16): "We have no such custom, neither the churches of God"; and that he writes to and of the churches "of Laodicea, of Galatia, of Asia, of Judea, at Corinth"; and that he and Barnabas "ordained them elders in every church" (Acts xiv. 23). The professed believers in the Lord Jesus Christ were thus called the *Church* in each particular place.

There is a fourth use of the word. As those churches

in cities and towns grew and extended, there would be more than would come together for worship in any one place, and so it became " the church that is in thy house " ; in the sense in which we speak of a church as a congregation.

Those are the four most habitual uses of the word Church. The fifth use, according to some commentators, is that of the building or place in which people gathered together for worship, as when we read in 1 Cor. xiv. 19 : " In the church I had rather speak five words with my understanding, that I might instruct others also " ; and " Let your women keep silence in the churches." When we say that a thank-offering has been sent up from the Church in this or that place, it does not much matter whether we mean from the building where the people came to worship, or from the people worshipping inside. At any rate, we are quite accustomed to use it in either sense ; we use it, of the place where professed Christians come together to worship, and also of the worshippers themselves. We shall therefore be using the word in a scriptural sense, if we speak of all professed Christians in any place as the Church of God in that place. For instance, " the Church of God in Tunbridge Wells," would thus mean all the professed Christian people in this town ; of which a representative portion is gathering together in these meetings, and where we are all professedly believers in the Lord Jesus Christ.

It is important to keep in mind the great distinction which the old divines so often enforced, between the inward and the outward Church. Over and over again, what our Lord spoke in the Parable of the Good

Seed and the Tares comes true. We have not enough discernment and wisdom to see or to know which are tares and which is the true wheat. They are both to grow together until the harvest. But we have often had cases in the history of the Church, where a gathering of professed Christian people endeavoured to make itself absolutely pure, and so to constitute a perfect Church. Yet it always succeeded either in turning some out who ought to have been kept in, or leaving some in who ought to have been turned out. The Lord tells us that the tares and the wheat are to grow together to the harvest, in the same field. That is, there will be a professing Church which has within it not only true believing people; and there is within the professing outer Church an inner circle consisting of all who are absolutely and truly believing people.

It is interesting to notice, with these meanings in our mind, how grandly wide the Church of God is, how absolutely it refuses to be tied down by any human subdivisions. It is to be taken, first and foremost, in the sense of "the blessed company of all faithful people." Perhaps that is the nearest point to the Catholic Church—*Catholic* meaning the whole, the universal body of the faithful. The one thing emphasised about it is that it is composed of *all* faithful people—not faithful people with a certain name, or enrolled in a certain community, or holding a certain form, or uttering a certain Shibboleth; not contradicting themselves as the Church of Rome does, in claiming to be "Catholics," and excluding instead of including all Christians who do not submit to Rome. It is like setting a limit to unlimited liberty. *Catholic*

includes the whole believing people all over the world. That is the grand extension of the word *Church.* Further, it is not only grandly extended ; it is quite sharply limited, it is to be composed of all them that love the Lord Jesus Christ in sincerity and in truth. " If any man love not the Lord Jesus Christ," said the apostle, " let him be anathema." There you have the Church of God limited in the sense of its being composed only of believers.

Once more, the Church is called upon, so far, to be assertive—not self-assertive, but Christ-assertive. It is not meant to hide its light under a bushel, or under a bed, but to be set on high so that its whole light may shine out. Speaking to those who know they are in the Church of God, who know that they belong to it, may I impress upon you, as I would upon myself, that the world expects us to assert our faith. They wonder that we don't do it. I remember hearing, years ago, the story of an officer who had just been converted. He had already let his light shine, and told his brother officers that he was a Christian. Shortly afterwards he went to a regimental ball ; and as soon as he went in, one of those whom he had told he was a Christian said, " What ! Are *you* here ? " He said, " I soon got out, and never went to another." The world knew that he ought not to be there, if he was a Christian. The world is a deal quicker to know what we ought to be, and to know sometimes what we are, than we ourselves. It is just as in the days of our Lord. Not one of His disciples remembered that He would rise from the dead ; but the Pharisee did, saying : " This deceiver said, In three days I will rise again. Let us

put a stone there and seal it, and put a guard." Not one of the disciples were looking for it. Let us give the world what they really know they ought to have—a bright, shining light, an assertive testimony, done with grace, but done with salt; with grace, the Lord teaching us how; but with salt, with a sting in it when it wants a sting, that we may show that there is something in Christ, something the world is sadly losing. That is the call to the Church.

I want to emphasise that idea, that the Church is the "*calling out*," the *ecclesia*. That is the meaning of the word Church—*called out* for a special purpose. The moment you say it is a *calling out*, you suggest three things. They are called out—WHAT FROM? They are called out—WHAT BY? They are called out—WHAT TO? The Church ought to know, and we, if we are really members of it ought to know, what we are called out *from*, what we are called out *by*, what we are called out *to*. To put it as briefly as possible, I will take the answers to those questions from 1 Peter i. We notice there, in the 6th verse, we are called out from an easy life. "Though now for a little while, if need be, ye have been put to grief in manifold temptations, that the proof of your faith, being more precious than gold that perisheth though it is proved by fire, might be found unto praise and glory and honour at the revelation of Jesus Christ." Trial of your faith must come. St. Paul said, "We must through much tribulation enter into the kingdom of God"; "All that will live godly in Christ Jesus, shall suffer persecution." So that we are called out from an easy life. It is just as well to tell inquiring souls that at the outset. It seems sometimes as if

only the blessing and love and joy of the gospel were preached, and not the salt that is meant to go with it. Our Lord and His disciples put both together from the very first. We must go through much tribulation if we are blessed of God in leading sinning souls to Christ. If we tell a converted soul at the outset, "You are in Christ, and all in Christ is for your use; but remember you will meet with trials at once"; then when the trials come he does not turn away and say, "I did not bargain for this." He has the sign-post to tell him he is in the right way and in the right place. We were never meant to go to heaven in velvet slippers. We are called out from an easy life.

In the 14th verse we notice that we are called out from an evil life: "As obedient children, not fashioning yourselves according to the former lusts, in your ignorance." Of course, the evil thing, the consciously known evil thing, is at once to be put away. As some of our American evangelists say, "Quit sinning." It is a good phrase. If we know and recognise a thing as not right in God's sight, let us not dabble with it. We are called right out of an evil life. We are not called to give it up gradually. You see a man who has been a thief, and he is brought to the Lord. He says he has been in the habit of picking five or six pockets a day. You do not tell him to pick two or three a day, and then one a day, and so give it up gradually. You say, "Let him that stole steal no more." Shall we not say that to ourselves about everything we know to be not according to God's mind? If it looks superhumanly difficult, we have got superhuman power to meet it. "Faithful

is He that calleth you, who also will do it." If He calls you out and you give yourself to Him, He will take you right out of an evil life ; and the world will wonder, and give glory to Him.

Once more, in the 18th verse we read : " Forasmuch as ye know that ye were not redeemed with corruptible things, as silver and gold, from your vain conversation "—your empty manner of life. Think of that. Every single, real member of the Church of Christ is called out of an empty life. It is an awful thing to hear nowadays of such enormous masses of people engaged in one thing—killing time ; murderers putting time to death. Every true Christian is called out of that, to redeem the time, to buy it up, to use it to the very best advantage, to go straight to the Master if there is any doubt about it, and ask Him what He means our hitherto empty life to be filled with. We are called out of an empty life, and no life is witnessing for God as it should, if it has not answered this call. A person may come out of an easy life and out of an evil life, but perhaps he has not yet come out of an empty life. Sometimes you will hear some one saying : " I do no harm." Just imagine reducing yourself to such an empty, useless condition as that ! Why, a wooden chair could say more than that : it at least does something in resting the weary body that uses it. For us, the whole life is to be filled, occupied, governed, gladdened by, and rejoicing in, the service of God. That is what the Church is called out from.

What are we called out BY ? In the 2nd verse we are called : " Elect, according to the foreknowledge of God the Father, through sanctification of the

Spirit." *By the Spirit.* That is the power of the call, coming in to every believing heart, and there and then *separating* it—the great fountain thought of sanctification—separating it from all evil uses. *Called out through sanctification of the Spirit.* The 19th verse: Called out by "The precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot." The 23rd verse: Called out by "The word of God which liveth and abideth for ever." Let us make much of that power by which we are called out. Of old, the priests would have the blood and the oil put upon the tip of the right ear, and the thumb of the right hand, and the toe of the right foot, to tell them that, blood-bought and Spirit-anointed, they belonged to God. They had heard His call and yielded to it. And now the blood of Christ, and the anointing of the Holy Ghost, is the power for the call to you. We ought to stand constantly in the power of that call. We ought to say, "I cannot do this by myself"; it is quite right to know we cannot; and then we should see His power in which it can be done. You know, almost every one of you, that if any one comes forward and offers for some work for God in a light spirit, and says, "I can do that," they are as good as useless before they start. But if one says, "I have no power, or wisdom, or skill to do that," that is the soul whom God can fit.

"How ready is the man to go
Whom God hath never sent;
How timorous, diffident, and slow,
God's chosen instrument."

What are we called TO? The 2nd verse: "Unto obedience." That is the great thought, first of all,

so often forgotten by those who know that they are called out, and forgiven, and cleansed. They forget that they are called unto something. They are like Israel. The Israelites were very glad to be called out of Egypt, and they were longing to be called into the promised land. They were glad to get rid of the task-masters, but they did not care to learn obedience at Sinai, nor to fight the foes in the great cities in Canaan. We are all called out from this evil life by such power from God that we need not hesitate.

What are we called to? The 2nd verse: Called "unto obedience, and sprinkling of the blood of Jesus Christ." We notice in the 15th verse, "He which called you is holy; be ye yourselves also holy in all manner of conversation." Called unto holiness. The underlying thought of *holiness* is that of separation. We are meant to be separate from other uses, just as a man could make holy his field or house. It did not mean that the grass of the field got a high moral quality, or the house became of higher character. No, it was separate from other uses, unto God. A wonderful thought, this. Is not this the real meaning of denying yourself? Nine-tenths of the people who talk of "denying self" only mean "denying something to oneself"; and that is a poor substitute. It is like the young lady who said: "Lenten self-denial is a very useful thing; what I save by denying myself sweets enabled me to buy a new bonnet for Easter." That is not self-denial; denying self is to own that you belong to another. If you went to another man's gardener, and said, "Come away, and work in my garden," he would reply, "No, I am serving my master, I cannot come away." He owned his

master, and denied himself. We are called unto holiness, and therefore we should own that we belong to another, even Christ.

Again: "Seeing ye have purified your souls in obeying the truth through the Spirit unto unfeigned love of the brethren, love one another from the heart fervently" (verse 22). There is the last call—unto love of the brethren. What wonderful fulness, something to be thought over and prayed over, something to open our hearts to, and to ask Him to write on the living tables of our hearts—this wonderful call of His; something concerning which by His grace it may be said of us, as it is said of Abraham, "He being called, obeyed." Shall we recognise the call, and yield our lives in obedience? Obedience—that is the upward look; holiness—that is the inward look; the love of the brethren—that is the outward look, for the service and the glory of God.

THE CHURCH OF CHRIST

Its Divine Unity

By the Rev. David M. McIntyre

THE CHURCH OF CHRIST

Its Divine Unity

THE Definition of the Church is the sum of those characters which distinguish it from every other institution. The Divine Unity of the Church is the aggregation of those forces which gather out of every denominational system, and bind into one spiritual fellowship, the widely distributed members of Christ.

At a memorable crisis in His ministry our Lord gave to the institution which His followers were to establish under His direction its distinctive name. "Upon this rock I will build My church" (Matt. xvi. 18). The Church of Christ, that "most august and blessed society of the saints," has the quick centre of its unity in its relation to the one Lord. On this "rock" of apostolic testimony to the Divine Nature and Messianic Mission of the Redeemer the sacred edifice of the Church is reared. On this foundation two notable characteristics of the Church are displayed —it is the assemblage of "the called" in Christ Jesus, and it is the purchased and inalienable possession of the Master.

But the doctrine of the Divine Unity of the Church is given to us with greatest clearness in connection with those incidents which signalise the eve of our Saviour's Passion. It is displayed pictorially in the

Memorial Supper, and is set forth in terms in the Sacramental Discourses and in the High Priestly Prayer.

On that night on which He was betrayed, a little company of faithful men gathered around their Lord in the Upper Room in Jerusalem. They had continued with Him in all His afflictions. They had toiled with Him, prayed with Him, wept with Him. Now He is about to leave them. But ere He departs He receives them into an abiding and spiritual fellowship with Himself and with one another. He breaks the bread and pours out the wine, saying, "Take eat. . . . Drink ye all of it" (Matt. xxvi. 26, 27). And as they observe this rite of communion with their Lord they proclaim the intimacy of their union one with the other. They, being many, are one.

Of the great truths which are illustrated in the Holy Supper, let us mention this first, that *the called of God are made partakers of a common life.* They eat of one bread; they drink of one cup.

This common life is derived from Christ, communicated through the Spirit, and received by faith.

(*a*) It is derived from Christ. "This is My body given for you. . . . This is My blood outpoured." The foundation fact of the Church's history is this, "Christ died for our sins." In the devotion of His love He gave Himself, but it was in dying that the gift was bestowed. The blood is the life, but the blood outpoured is the life laid down. Through the broken body of the Redeemer the fountain of life has flowed forth to quicken a ransomed race. By death the seed-corn planted by the hand of the

Great Husbandman has become the culture-bed of the springing life. When the alabaster box was broken, the fragrance of the diffused spikenard began to fill the house. We have been crucified together with Christ, say the saints, nevertheless we live; and yet not we, but Christ who liveth in us. There is only one way to the Father—it is the way of the cross. There is only one table of divine fellowship—it is the table which uplifts the symbols of sacrifice. There is only one song of the redeemed—it is the song of the Lamb.

"As the voice of many waters all saints sing as one."

(*b*) Again, this common life is communicated through the Spirit.

"I will pray the Father," said the departing Saviour to His feeble flock, "and He shall give you another Comforter, that He may be with you for ever, even the Spirit of truth. . . . He abideth with you, and shall be in you" (John xiv. 16, 17).

Our Lord illustrates this communication of life by the Spirit under the figure of the vine and its branches. In early spring, the vine-stock is a mere unsightly projection of brown wood. It is, as it were, a root out of a dry ground, having no form nor comeliness. But the sun and the dew and the warm south wind stir the life that is imprisoned in the shaggy root; and presently, in this place and that, one swelling bud and then another reveal the fact that an expansive movement is in progress. Soon the bud becomes a twig, the twig a branch. The white root-fibres of the tiny shoot are planted not in the soil, but in the stock. And up through

those rootlets the branch draws its strength, its grace, its fruitfulness. After a time, hidden among the leaves and swaying tendrils, the fruit begins to form. Slowly the clusters ripen under the summer sun, until, at length, the slender bough droops beneath the rich burden of the ripened grapes. All this beauty and wealth of life proceed from the vine-stock, and are borne to every leaf and blossom by the circulating sap. It is thus, our Lord seems to tell us, that we derive our virtues and attainments from the fulness of His life. The believer is "rooted" in Christ. The life-principle is in Him: it is communicated to us by the Holy Spirit. Each branch has an individual existence, but it is an integral part of one great system. Each branch attains to its own predestined form, but it is of one species with the rest. Each branch differs in a thousand particulars from every other, but all of them are laden with the same fruit. Now, "the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, long-suffering, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, meekness, self-control" (Gal. v. 22, 23).

(*c*) Once more, this common life is received by faith.

In His High Priestly Prayer our Saviour, passing from the thought of the little company which then surrounded Him to the contemplation of the great Church of the First-born, prolongs and extends His intercession: "Neither for these only do I pray, but for them also that believe on Me through their word; that they may all be one; even as Thou, Father, art in Me, and I in Thee" (John xvii. 20, 21). He foresees the establishment and progress of His Church. He speaks of it in its simple beginnings:

He speaks of it in its widest extension. And these extremes are united by the diffusion of the word and the exercise of faith. All have received the word, all have believed.

The " word " here spoken of is the testimony of our Lord's disciples to His Person and His work. It is a definite body of truth transmitted to succeeding generations by the eye-witnesses and first ministers of the Incarnate Word. It is the form of doctrine delivered once for all to the saints. It is the message of reconciliation conveyed to us by the apostles and prophets of the New Testament, and enshrined in the canonical Scriptures. It is the gospel of acceptance and renewal in the blood and by the Spirit of Christ. This word all the saints receive, and in receiving it enter into oneness of life with Him who is the subject of the promises and the object of faith.

Faith, in its New Testament sense, is, briefly, appropriation ; saving faith is the appropriation of the Saviour. This grace of faith is signified by the action of the communicant, who " takes " the bread and the wine. The sacred elements are " the patterns of the true," they are the symbols of the broken body and the outpoured blood. And as in the action of communicating, the participant *receives* the memorial emblems, so in the apprehension of faith the believer *receives* Christ—with the same simplicity, directness, and reality. It is Christ Himself who is thus apprehended—not a mere manifestation or influence : it is Christ in His fulness—His body and His blood ; it is Christ in His self-oblation—the body is broken and the blood is shed.

A second thought which is illustrated in the sacrament of the Supper is this: the saints who have been made partakers of a common life betray their kinship by *allegiance to the one Lord.*

Present, but unseen, the Master of the Feast welcomes and entertains His guests. If it be true that "Where the Church is, there is Christ," it is so only because of a prior truth, that "Where Christ is, His people are." From every region of life and experience they gather unto His name, and where they are met His presence shines upon them. Aonio Paleario, one of the Italian reformers, was arrested and brought before the priests. They asked him, "What is the first article of religion?" He answered, "Jesus Christ." "And the second?" "Jesus Christ." "And the third?" "Jesus Christ." So they burned him, because, as they thought, he left no room for the Church. They were wrong. In exalting the name of the Redeemer the martyr was laying the only true foundation for the doctrine of the Church. The Church is Christ mystical: the saints are one in Him.

In the fourteenth century, Raymond Lull, missionary of the Romish Church, landed at Buggia on the African coast. He was then nearly eighty years of age; his strength had been consumed in the service of the Redeemer. The Saracens fell upon him, dragged him out of the city, and stoned him to death. It was remembered afterwards that when the hail of stones was falling thick and fast he struggled to his feet, lifted his hands to God, and cried with his departing breath, "None but Christ! None but Christ!" Two centuries later, the Church which

had sent Lull to preach the gospel to the Saracens sent Lambert the Lollard to the stake in Smithfield. Of him it is related that he sank down upon the chain, and after he had been lying in the fire for some time, two of the officers present lifted him up on their halberds. Raising his hands heavenward, his fingers (so it is said) flaming like torches, he cried in the rapture and exultation of death, in the very words which had been uttered two hundred years before on the beach at Buggia, "None but Christ! None but Christ!" Franciscan and Gospeller, severed by seas, by centuries, by creeds, they were of one mind to make Jesus King. Each was content to die for the sake of the Name.

Rutherford, the Covenanter, preaching once on the prevailing defections of the time, glanced aside to speak of "the fragrance of Sharon's fair and bleeding Rose." "Ay, haud you there!" ejaculated one of the Scots lords who was of the congregation, "Haud you there! Now you are right." Differences of opinion and discord of spirit die at the feet of the Lord. One can almost hear the keen disputant speak of Him in whose love his eager spirit found rest. That kindling eye, that upturned countenance, that high and piercing voice, have all been described to us by his contemporaries. The name of Jesus was "honey in the mouth, melody to the ear, and jubile in the heart" to this zealous controversialist and seraphic lover of the Master. "Now you are right," said the Scots lord when that dear name fell upon his ears. And, indeed, no child of God could refrain from yielding assent to words like these: "God has many fair flowers in His garden, but the fairest of

all fair flowers is Christ. . . . His love is come to a fair bloom, like a young rose opened out of the green leaves ; and it casteth a strong and fragrant smell. . . . He graceth heaven and all His Father's house with His presence. He is a rose that beautifieth all the upper garden of God ; a leaf of that rose of God is worth a world. . . . O, sweet, sweet, for evermore to see a rose of heaven growing in as ill a soil as hell. . . . O, that jewel and flower of heaven, and earth's love, . . . eternity's bloom and flower, . . . the Rose of Sharon, the Paradise and Eden of the saints."

However sharply the family of faith may disagree respecting the circumstantials of doctrine or the details of administration, they are all of one accord in laying the crown of beauty and of joy upon the brow of Christ.

> "Thy saints proclaim Thee King, for in their hearts
> Thy title is engraven with a pen
> Dipped in the fountain of eternal love."

One other thought is impressed upon our minds by the symbolism of the sacramental feast : we are not only sharers in a common life and subjects of the one Lord—*we are guest-friends of one another.* In this sacred meal we are covenanted to a fellowship of grace and helpfulness. " The cup of blessing which we bless, is it not a communion of the blood of Christ ? The bread which we break, is it not a communion of the body of Christ ? seeing that we, who are many, are one bread, one body " (1 Cor. x. 16, 17).

This thought is the deep undertone of our Lord's sacramental meditations. Again and again, the dis-

turbed course of His exhortation returns to that "new commandment," which indeed His disciples had received in the beginning, but which was then enriched with an added significance and confirmed with a new sanction, "That ye love one another, even as I have loved you." And in the Prayer of Intercession He asks, first, that His disciples may be kept from the evil that is in the world; then, rising higher, He pleads for their sanctification; finally, His petitions culminate in the prayer, "That they all may be one"—a prayer repeated thrice in three successive verses (vv. 21, 22, 23). This request is the sum of His intercession for His people on this side the veil.

Our Lord does not bid us sigh for uniformity in worship, nor does He encourage us to anticipate a general unification of Church order. There is reason to believe that the diverse operations of the Spirit will still result in differences of administration—at least until the Lord come. Nor can we hope for a perfect agreement in regard to subsidiary truth until that day dawn when "the watchmen . . . shall see eye to eye, when the Lord returneth to Zion." Even an apostle was forced to confess, "Now we see in a mirror darkly; but then face to face: now I know in part; but then shall I know even as also I have been known."

The calamity and injury of the Church to-day is not the prevalence of distinction, but the failure of love. We do not grieve the Spirit of grace by maintaining our denominational peculiarities, but by building walls of separation too high for love to overpass.

It may be freely confessed that it is a lofty attainment in divine charity to love in distinction as freely as in unison. Perhaps it is not in nature to regard a follower of another party, an adherent of another creed, a member of another Church, with as hearty an affection as we lavish on one who belongs to our own persuasion. But that we ought to do so is one of the commonplaces of the doctrine of Christ. Let us hear His own words, spoken in what was perhaps the most solemn hour of His life: "The glory which Thou hast given Me I have given unto them; that they may be one, even as We are one" (John xvii. 22).

The "glory" to which our Saviour alludes in these words is, as I understand it, the image and likeness of God which are the properties of His Divine Sonship. These features were reproduced in the sinless humanity of Jesus. In the days of His flesh He was "the express image," the sharply graven character of the unseen God. And, having learned obedience by the things which He suffered, He attained in His resurrection to a perfectly matured filial relation with the Eternal Father, as it is written, "Thou art My Son, this day have I begotten Thee" (Acts xiii. 33). The image of God which was perfectly drawn in Him is reproduced in His people in the measure of their faith.

A contemplative writer of the fourteenth century asserts that when we look into our hearts we see a mirror, and in the mirror a dark image, the image of self. But, he adds, as in faith and longing after God we continue to gaze into the depths of our nature, the image changes, the obscurity and soil of sin pass away, a steadfast light begins to shine,

and through that light as of stars the face of Christ appears. We are transformed into the likeness of the Lord.

Now, if this be true of the interior vision, it is at least as true when we look upon the face of our brother in the faith. "The saints and the Saviour," says an old writer, "have only one countenance." It is a profitable exercise in the practice of perfection to accustom ourselves to trace the lineaments of Christ as they shine through the homely features of our brother's routine and commonplace life. Is there not a reflection of the Master in the mind of the humblest saint? And ought not those who wear that sacred image to be very dear to us for the Saviour's sake?

Let us therefore love one another. I have been informed that it is statute law of this realm that any hostile blow struck within the royal palace shall be regarded as an offence against the crown. I am sure that there is a similar law in the household of faith, and that to smite a fellow-servant is to wound the Master. "Beloved, let us love; for love is of God." On what was, I think, a special day of prayer, I saw in the Synagogue in Rome each worshipper turn to the one nearest to him, and, laying a hand of benediction on his brother's head, bless him in the name of the Lord. Such a spirit of brotherly-kindness and Christian charity is the sorest need of the Church to-day. "Love, as I have loved," the Lord commanded. "That they may be one, as We are one," the Saviour prayed. It was when the hundred and twenty suppliants in the Upper Room had come to be of one accord that the Spirit of glory and of

God fell on them. And when ecclesiastical defences are dismantled, and Church barriers are overthrown at the return of Christ, then the Church of the Redeemer shall arise from the dust, and, arraying herself in garments of strength and beauty, shall shine in the glory of her Lord.

Two consequences proceed from the spiritual oneness of the children of God—*the saints are perfected, and the world is convinced.*

(*a*) The saints are perfected. "I in them, and Thou in Me, that they may be perfected into one" (John xvii. 23).

Students of nature tell us that each species of rose has its own distinctive perfume; and I have sometimes thought that each branch of the Church of Christ is characterised by a peculiar quality of saintliness. Nor is it difficult to understand how this may be the case, for each Church lays a particular emphasis on one or other of the great truths which together constitute the sum of saving knowledge. And thus the specific "difference" of each denomination creates in its adherents a special fragrance of Christian character and conduct. What is true of each individual believer—that it is only "with all saints" that we are enabled to comprehend the breadth and length, the depth and height of the love of God—is true therefore of each denominational system. Even those saints who have already passed into the presence of God shall receive a more abundant felicity when those who follow after have been gathered to them: "That apart from us they should not be made perfect." It is a loss to the most advanced

believer to be unable to enter into and appreciate that frame of saintly temper, that fashion of holy living, which characterise the deeply exercised members of another communion.

(*b*) This consequence also will follow: the world will know and believe (John xvii. 21, 23). There is nothing so convincing as love. From time to time we talk of the decay of faith, and remind ourselves of the harmfulness of present-day errorists. But, after all, the true cause of the weakening of the Church is the failure of love.

A quaint little story is told of Archbishop Fénelon. Once, as he walked in the country, he came upon a widow's cow which had strayed from its rightful pasture. He captured it, and brought it back to the owner; then, knowing her to be a Huguenot, he thought to improve the occasion by asking, "Where was your Church two hundred years ago?" "Monseigneur," she replied, with a woman's wit and courtesy, "in good hearts like yours." She claimed him, in virtue of his charity, as a member of the true and apostolic Church of Christ.

If the children of the kingdom love one another, the world will believe in the grace of Christ, and in the Spirit of love whom He, being raised from the dead, has sent forth to dwell in the hearts of His people. But if this evidence be lacking, let logic be ever so profound, and rhetoric ever so persuasive, they will not believe.

In one of Raphael's cartoons, representatives of the Church are depicted grouped round the altar of communion. They look upon the sacred emblems, and they are of one mind in the Lord. As they gaze,

in wonder and in love, the heavens open above them, and the returning Lord is seen in the clouds of heaven coming with power and great glory, with all His holy angels. "Lo, this is our God," they seem to say; "We have waited for Him, and He will save us: this is the Lord, we have waited for Him, we will be glad and rejoice in His salvation."

"The shout of a King is among them. One day may I be
Of that perfect communion of lovers contented and free
In the land that is very far off, and far off from the sea.

The shout of a King is among them. One King and one song,
One thunder of manifold voices harmonious and strong,
One King, and one love, and one shout of one worshipping throng."

THE CHURCH OF CHRIST

Indwelt by the Holy Spirit

By the Rev. Preb. Webb-Peploe, M.A.

[*Not revised by the Speaker*]

THE CHURCH OF CHRIST

Indwelt by the Holy Spirit

I SHOULD like to take a thought, first, suggested by the very title of my subject, and say that *the expression*, " Holy Spirit," is only found four times in the whole of the New Testament. We read of the " Holy Ghost " in our English Translation (the words are one and the same in the Greek) *eighty-nine* times, but only *four* times is the " Holy Spirit " mentioned. When we begin to enquire what is really the distinction between the one and the other, we ought to remember that, in the original, the word *pneuma* applies to breath, wind, spirit, and to the air that surrounds us. When we speak of the Holy Ghost, we mean the Third Person of the Trinity, unseen, absolutely spiritual, with no bodily form of any kind, and therefore not to be identified in any sense with material matter. But the motive power and the vitality of the Godhead would seem to be implied in the expression, " the Spirit of God," or " the Spirit of the Lord," or " the Holy Spirit." " The Spirit of God " is mentioned thirteen times in the Old Testament, and fifteen times in the New Testament. " The Spirit of the Lord " is mentioned twenty-six times in the Old Testament, and five in the New ; as if *Jehovah*, which is the title involved in the expression *Lord*, was some-

what peculiarly brought before us in the Old Testament, while in the New we are gradually led to think of the expression *Christ* as being the medium through which the Godhead is more especially revealed to us. But the one main idea before us is that the Church of the Lord Jesus Christ is to be recognised as indwelt, inhabited by the Spirit of God. When we ask, What shall we understand by the expression " the Church of Christ " ? it might be well for us to take one such verse as 1 Cor. i. 2. You will see there that the apostle says, " Unto the church of God which is at Corinth, to them that are sanctified in Christ Jesus, called to be saints, with all that in every place call upon the name of Jesus Christ our Lord, both theirs and ours." I do not know a finer definition of " the Church." I would wish neither to narrow nor to enlarge it, but to take in, as far as possible, by the grace of God, this splendid definition of " the Church," which therefore knows no limitations as to denomination or locality, as to individual rights or organisations, but which simply includes in itself every single person who can recognise the calling to be a saint, or to be holy, and to enjoy the fellowship of the Lord Jesus Christ, who is both ours and theirs, whosoever they may be that claim Him as their Lord.

This being the accepted definition of " the Church," I want you to realise that the subject is so essentially Biblical that I can hardly do otherwise than refer you to the text (Cor. vi. 19, 20), where the apostle says, " What ? "—as if he was attributing ignorance to those to whom he wrote—" know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost which is in you, which ye have of God,

and ye are not your own ? For ye are bought with a price ; therefore glorify God in your body, and in your spirit, which are God's." In the Revised Version these last words are omitted, and we are simply charged to glorify God in our bodies. I do not know whether you are accustomed to think closely and accurately of the expressions that occur in God's Holy Book. If you are, you will recognise that we have here a very remarkable expression, and one that needs a good deal of meditation. It is not as in the earlier verses, " your bodies." In verse 15 we read, " Your bodies are the members of Christ." But the apostle goes on to speak here of the *body* as distinguished from *bodies*, and he says, " What ? know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost ? " I want you to realise the distinction between the two. We frequently hear and see remarks by somewhat thoughtless speakers, or writers, upon the subject of *temples*, and we are often challenged with the idea that each one of us is intended to be personally and experimentally a temple of the living God, or of the Holy Ghost. Whereas, if you have carefully and scrupulously studied God's Book, I think you will be led to the conclusion which I have myself adopted—that we never read of more than one temple, and that for the unity of the Church in its broadest possible sense which we represent under the Evangelical Alliance, it is peculiarly needful that we should apprehend the exactness of the terms used in God's Book. We never read of " temples " as applied either to the Church of the New Testament or the Old, but we invariably have the expression " temple." And so it is here : " Know ye not that your body is the

temple of the Holy Ghost." Having adopted that idea many years ago—that the word *temple* applied to the Church, and not to individual members of it, I had an opportunity of consulting one of the most learned commentators and writers of our own time, and asking him whether the view I had been led to take up would be accurate according to his judgment as a great theologian. He at once assented to what I have mentioned, and told me he felt convinced it was correct, namely, that when the apostle says, "What? know ye not that your body," etc., we might translate it, What? know ye not that the body which you Christians or Churchmen make up—that is, "the body of you," not your individual body, referred to in the 15th verse under the expression "bodies," but that the body which you make up, as believers, is the temple of the Holy Ghost. That commentator said, "I thank you much for having called my attention to it, and I am convinced myself that it is an accurate solution of a difficult passage, more especially as in the Revised Version the latter words are omitted." So it means that we are to glorify God in our body, or the body of us as a Church.

If we be actually the body of Christ, as the Church of Christ, throughout the length and breadth of the world, we are the individual living stones in the Temple of God, and it is essential that we should remember our own proper individual position, and how we are linked one to the other; the living stones in the temple touching one another and therefore affecting one another, and the whole body of Christ; and it is essential that we should work for each other's welfare, otherwise we might in one sense be

in danger of destroying the edifice of the Temple of God.

If this be the idea of the Church, I would ask you to think, for one moment, of the fact that there has been,—as in so many other matters,—in regard to the Temple of God, a three-fold manifestation, or a trinity in unity. We speak of the Great High God as Three in One, and of our own manhood as having trinity in unity—spirit, soul, and body. We speak of almost everything revealed to us in nature as being three in one. You have the body of the sun, the heat of the sun, and the light of the sun, and they make but one. An infidel, when travelling for hunting purposes, met a North-American Indian and asked him, "Do you really profess to believe that there are three Gods in one?" The Indian, shrugging his shoulders, said to the infidel, "Yes, I do." "It is absurd," said the infidel, "there can be no such thing." The Indian without any further words touched the man, led him out of his wigwam, and took him down to the river close by, which was frozen heavily and covered with snow. The Indian with his staff drew aside the snow and broke the ice, and allowed a sufficient hole for the water to be seen, and he said, "Water and ice, ice and water, snow and water—three in one." That Indian taught him a lesson in a splendid way, a lesson which we might well ponder, as to the doctrine of the Trinity in Unity.

I want you, next, to recognise that there have been three manifestations of the temple which typifies this beautiful Church of which we are members. First, there was the material temple built by Solomon, which was, of course, significant, but not spiritual in

itself. It symbolised the grand teaching which God would bring home to the souls of men, but in itself it was of the earth.

Then came the second magnificent temple of the body of Christ, when He took our nature and became a Man.

But when He passed away to bequeath to His Church the holy privilege of representing Him, the third temple began to be erected by the Holy Ghost. God the Father, the great high God Jehovah, revealed Himself of old to Israel. God the Son revealed Himself in the body of Jesus when He came as a Man. Now God the Holy Ghost reveals Himself in the Church, the Church which represents Him, and it is the one body, the one temple, the only one, which God the Holy Ghost has built for the glory and the habitation of Christ, and for the honour of God the Father.

The Holy Spirit of God is deigning to inhabit the Church in its separate members, that He may bind them together in " the unity of the Spirit, in the bond of peace, and in righteousness of life," that He may bring glory and honour to Christ as the Head, and, through the Head, that the Church when it is complete may be brought to the feet of His Father, and that the topstone may be brought forth with shoutings of " Grace, Grace unto it." Our calling is " a high calling," " a holy calling," " a heavenly calling." Our calling is high, lifting us into marvellous light, and raising us to the throne of God. Our calling is a holy calling. 1 Peter i. 15, 16 : " As He which hath called you is holy, so be ye holy in all manner of conversation ; because it is written, Be ye holy ; for I am holy." Our calling is a heavenly calling.

We are to be uplifted from depths of degradation, until we take our place alongside of, and on the throne with Jesus Christ in the heavenly places. What a marvellous position, even now by faith, the Church of the living God can adopt and take for itself! What a magnificent dignity is granted to the living members of the living Body, of which Christ is the Head. Do we apprehend as we ought that we are the temple of the living God?

Will you observe that in this one chapter the apostle says, no less than six times, "Know ye not?" Once in the 3rd chapter and the 16th verse, he says the same: "Know ye not that ye are the temple of God, and that the Spirit of God dwelleth in you?" So that seven times, on two pages as they lie open in this Bible, he challenges us with the expression, "Know ye not?" What does that convey to a thoughtful mind? A certain degree of reproach, as much as to say, "You ought to know, and, if you know, you ought to exhibit the consequences of the fact upon which I would speak."

Further, he seems to add a kindly measure of information. "What, do ye not? then let me inform you." And so to-day it would seem as if the Holy Ghost would wish to recall to us a certain fact which we ought never to forget, but that He in His mercy would give us information which shall enable us in future to live up to the honour of the position that we are called to occupy.

I take some words now from a periodical of great value, and one which is constantly being brought before us, where I read these words: "Never, surely, was there a time when more was thought and written

as to the Holy Spirit, than the present; never an age when there was a deeper longing to know Him and to experience the deepest possibilities of His power; never were men and women more really seeking and praying for a fuller manifestation of the Spirit of God." Shall I offend you if I say that if these words are correct one can only cry, "God have mercy upon the ages that preceded us; for I do not find that even now we hear too much of the Holy Spirit of God, nor do I see personally very many who are anxiously and yearningly inquiring for the full manifestation of the power of the Spirit of God. It would seem as if in later generations all matters connected with the Holy Spirit of God had more or less fallen into abeyance, and been comparatively lost sight of. We can remember how, in the philosophical age of the eighteenth century, there was no mention of Jesus at all, and men talked morality from the pulpit. Then you pass on to the time of revival that commenced one hundred years ago, and we can thank God for the bringing forth of the claims of Jesus, the beauties of the Saviour, the Second Person of the Trinity exhibited in mortal humanity and ready to die for our sins. But I do not know that the work of the Holy Ghost has ever received, in later generations, that attention which it ought to receive. And I do not know that the Third Person of the Trinity, even to-day, is really receiving as much attention and being spoken of as He ought.

There is one great token of marvel in connection with the subject of the Holy Ghost that is constantly put before our minds. His meekness and His humility are such that He never, if it can be avoided, speaks of

Himself; and, therefore, to dwell upon the subject of the Holy Ghost is rather, as it were, to bring forth into publicity that which He himself had deigned, in His wonderful wisdom and power, to conceal from the eyes of men. In a well-ordered household, things are done out of sight, and the person who does them is not to the front; the servants who wait upon us are hardly ever in evidence. And the Holy Ghost has, in His wondrous humility, His condescending tenderness towards the children of men, placed Himself more or less in a position of obscurity; so that while He, the Third Person of the Trinity, is the Agent, in the third great dispensation connected with humanity,—while He is the working power who does everything,—He has, as it were, purposely veiled His own personality, more or less, and we have to search for Him in the Scriptures, and then from the Scriptures bring out in application the workings of the Holy Ghost, before we really become conscious of what He is doing. There was a dispensation that might be called the dispensation of God—Elohim; another that might be called the dispensation of Christ Jesus. There is now the dispensation of the Holy Ghost, and my own conviction is that we have to look back to that particular day, entitled the Day of Pentecost, as the moment in the history of the world when the Holy Ghost in His wondrous love, in His yearning as the Spirit of life, and the power of the Godhead, deigned to lay aside altogether His glory, just as Jesus had done some thirty-three years before; and that as the Saviour was born of a woman in our human form, and lived among us as a man, that He might show how the Godhead could work in humanity, so

the Holy Ghost was willing to sacrifice Himself, was willing to lay aside His own greatness and majesty in connection with the Deity in glory, and for nearly nineteen hundred years He has been living amongst us. I believe from that Pentecostal Day when He came in absolute manifestation of power, He has never left the Temple, Christ's Body, the Church. It was a historical fact that the descent or advent of the Holy Ghost coming personally had never been known before, but that on the Day of Pentecost this great Gift was fully given. Have you ever thought of this, and that from that moment He has deigned to abide with us for ever? Our blessed Saviour promised that when He came He would never leave us, He would be with us for ever. And so He likened the Holy Ghost to the air around us. We might say that up to the moment when the Spirit descended upon the disciples in Jerusalem, there had been no real power or *breath* (that is the word used) for the Church of God as compared to that which would now be manifested. I speak tenderly and firmly. I trust that those who differ from me will pardon me for giving expression to this: I would as soon ask God to let the Lord Jesus Christ come again from heaven, and take His place among men, and die again upon Calvary's cross to bring about the salvation of the human race, as I would ask for the Holy Ghost to descend from heaven again, or that His advent might be re-enacted. I believe He came once, ever to abide, and has never returned to heaven. So that in whatsoever way He became connected with the earth on that Day of Pentecost, in distinction from His former dealings with men, that wondrous localisa-

tion or connection with the world has never been interrupted once from that hour.

He came to take possession of each individual member of the Body of Christ; so that exactly as a newborn soul comes into connection with the Lord Jesus, each one is partaker of the Holy Ghost by necessity, for he has the Spirit of Life from God, as we read in Ezek. xxxvii. There lay a wondrous mass of humanity upon the ground in human form, but there was no breath in them. Then came a shaking among the dry bones, and the cry was made, "Come from the four winds, O breath, and breathe upon these slain," and the Spirit of Life from God came into them, and "they stood up upon their feet, an exceeding great army." This was a vision of what was coming, and the exhibition of its fulfilment commenced on Pentecost Day, and from that hour there has been a perpetually advancing operation of the Holy Spirit, increasing the numbers of those who become living members of the Body of Christ. It may be that in our own lifetime the last stone that is required shall be brought into the Body of Christ, and oh, the unspeakable privilege of being possibly the man or the woman who might bring that soul as a living stone, and place it into the temple of the living God! Can you imagine the honour, the privilege, of being the one who should place that stone there by the power of the Holy Ghost, after having passed the gospel into a poor dead sinner? and then in one moment, the blast of the archangel, the trump of God, shall be heard, and Christ Jesus shall leave the Father's throne, and come and claim His Bride for Himself. In this—the dispensation of the Spirit—the

Church of Christ is indwelt by, or, as I myself prefer to say, instinct with the Holy Spirit. You will remember how upon that Pentecost Day, St. Peter says, in Acts ii. 16: "This is that which hath been spoken by the prophet Joel." You will see at once that there is a difference between that particular definition of what has happened, and any other definition found in the whole of the New Testament, concerning any fulfilment of any prophecy.

Again and again you will read in the books of the Evangelists, "This was done that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the prophet," or words to that effect. But never once do you read in connection with any other event, that particular expression, "*This is that* which was spoken by the prophet Joel." Joel ii. 28: "It shall come to pass afterward, that I will pour out my spirit upon all flesh." "Your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, your old men shall dream dreams, and your young men shall see visions." What about that expression? Does it mean something unusual? I cannot myself think otherwise than that it means that this is the actual fulfilment of the promise in all its majesty and in all its power. With this idea, as a young mission worker, I began to consult the best authorities on the subject. Dr. Pusey would have differed from us on many doctrinal points had he been alive now, but what does he say of that text? "I will pour out, that is, give largely, as though He would empty out Him who is infinite, so that there should be no measure of His giving, save our capacity of receiving." And when we turn to the words of Dr. Moule, Bishop of Durham, no light

authority in our generation, he says, " As the Messianic age approaches, the prophecies indicate a coming universal effusion of the Spirit (' Upon all flesh,' Joel ii. 28). The universality seems to refer to an extension to all races and ranks of men. The New Testament (Acts ii. 16–21) teaches that this was fulfilled at Pentecost when representatives of the race received the gospel, and the universal believing Church definitely began to be under the power of the Spirit. True, that beginning has a future, in which ' all the ends of the earth shall remember and turn unto the Lord ' (Ps. xxii. 27). Limits upon the work of grace at one period are no proof that it will be always limited ; but the passages here in question indicate not so much a work in every individual, certainly not an ' effusion upon ' every individual, as a world-wide extension of the Spirit's full action upon individuals, resulting in union with Christ in His Church universal."

Dr. Wordsworth says that " The pouring of the Spirit ' upon all flesh ' received its fulfilment in the person of the Lord Jesus Christ, because the Word was made flesh ; and now this blessing is to be poured through Him upon us ; so, as He received the fulness of the Spirit, the fulness of the Spirit was poured down on Him, and through Him upon all flesh that would take it." I beg of you to apprehend this. If these authorities be correct as confirming my own view of the matter—that the Holy Ghost came once for all, on that Pentecost Day, and that He never receded from this earth as in former days He did when men were filled spasmodically for special purposes, and that He has been amongst us working through the human agency from that day to this—

what are we to think of the Church of Christ being instinct with, or indwelt by, the Spirit of God? This, I believe: That God intended that there should be a universal endowment, an individual enduement, and a personal enjoyment from the Holy Ghost. The universal endowment was characteristic of Pentecost Day. Once and for ever the Spirit was outpoured, and He has been in and around the earth, like the air we breathe, from that day to this. An individual enduement takes place when any single person is quickened by the power of the Holy Ghost, and brought as a member into the Body of Christ, which is His Church, or the Temple of the living God. So, St. Paul can say (Rom. viii. 8–9): "If any man hath not the spirit of Christ, he is none of His."

But the personal enjoyment is what we would wish to speak of in closing. The Church of the living God, in its individual members, should not merely be a possessor of the Spirit, or quickened by the Spirit, but should be possessed by the Spirit. That would mean a personal enjoyment of His work. I wonder whether all my readers have studied the Word of God, from Matthew i. to Revelation xxii., with this conception of the Holy Ghost? Are you aware that the word Spirit occurs 385 times in the New Testament, out of which 153 are translated with a capital "S," to show that the Spirit is spoken of as a living Person. One hundred and thirty-three are put with a small "s," and we do not know for certain in some of them whether the spirit spoken of is the Spirit of God or the spirit of man. There are five or six other instances where the word is translated differently. But out of the 385, I believe, it is safe to assert that 261

definitely refer to the Holy Ghost, and that in every single one of these passages (this I found out in six months study of my Bible, to which I gave myself as a young man before I came to London) where the article is used, it is *the person* of the Holy Ghost that is mentioned; and where there is no article it is *the gifts or graces* of the Holy Ghost that are mentioned. So that, with the article it is the gift *of* the Person; without the article, it is the gifts *from* the Person.

It is quite possible for every one of us to-day to possess the Holy Ghost as the gift of God so far as we are quickened and kept by Him; it is quite another thing for us to be possessed by the Holy Ghost, so as to be filled with the Spirit, as we are told we ought to be (Eph. v. 18). What is really wanted to-day is this, I think: not pleading with God to send the Holy Ghost, as if blame lay at the door of our Father; not to talk about the baptism of the Holy Ghost, or of the Spirit—an expression never once found in the Bible; but rather to realise that we lack the gifts of the Spirit, and that it is our own fault. So, when you read in St. Luke xi. 13, "If ye then, being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children, how much more shall your heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit," as our translation says, but there is no article in the original, so there it means the gifts of the Spirit. What is lacking are the gifts. You wake one morning, it may be, to find to your horror that you were guilty of uncharitableness, and that you lacked that gift of the Holy Spirit which is love. You awake another morning and find that you were a coward, that you lacked that gift of the Holy Spirit which is courage. Though you received the Holy Ghost in one sense

when you were baptized spiritually into the body of Christ by being made a partaker of His death and resurrection, you may yet lack all the best gifts of the Holy Spirit. It is these that the Church is wanti. g to-day. We are indwelt by the Holy Ghost, or we could not live at all. But we are not instinct with the Holy Ghost, I fear, in many cases, because we have not given ourselves up to His power. And so you read, in the whole of the New Testament, of two totally different kinds of filling. The Greek words that are used concerning the filling by the Spirit are mightily distinguished. There is one Greek word which implies a distinctly normal continuous condition. That word, we find, is only used of individuals, in reference to Jesus Christ, Stephen, and Barnabas. We find it also in the closing words of Acts xiii. 52, where we read that "the disciples were filled with the Spirit." That is the only place in which we find any number of people brought into that condition in which they were normally filled, and remained so.

But the charge, in Eph. v. 18, "Be filled" to continuance, be filled to outcoming, until you overflow with the Holy Ghost, is for all. The other word which is frequently used means being filled spasmodically. There are many men and women at whom we may have marvelled, when they were enabled to carry out a particular work for a particular time. It is in that sense that the word occurs in the Old Testament. We read, too, of St. Peter, *after* Pentecost, when he spoke to the Jewish Sanhedrim, he was filled for the moment with courage and wisdom and power, but he went back from that, as we clearly see from St. Paul's rebuke to him in Gal. ii. 11, 12. There are many of us

Christians who have gone back, and the Church of God will only prosper when Christians yield themselves individually and entirely to the influence and power of the Holy Ghost, by casting out, as Hezekiah did, the dirt and filth in the temple. When Hezekiah and his priests went into the temple, they cast out all the filth that they found; and more would be found next day by a more careful search. More will be found in us every day, and it will have to be swept out by the power of the Lord, and then the Holy Ghost will take possession. Grace abhors a vacuum as much as nature does, and once create a vacuum by the removal of evil, and the Holy Ghost will pour in and fill the Church in all its members, in every individual part of His Body. Let Him have His rightful habitation.

What is the result? First, a negative result. Live in the Spirit, walk in the Spirit, be led by the Spirit, and you shall not fulfil the lusts of the flesh (Gal. v.). By the grace of God, let the Holy Ghost exercise His power, and you shall no longer walk in or obey the lusts of the flesh. The other result is positive. Walk in the Spirit, and then the fruit of the Spirit will be seen in you. There are seventeen words used for abominations to be got rid of (Gal. v.), but there are nine used concerning the Spirit's inflowing, and they are all marks of character, not of conduct. The fruit of the Spirit does not work, labour, toil; it is a fruit that grows, and it is all upon one branch. They are not *fruits*, but *fruit*, and these are the characteristics: "love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance." These are what is wanted. A gardener informed me lately of this fact,

without knowing in the least how I should be able to apply it. He said, "Do you know, there are nine ingredients in every grape that go to make up a perfect fruit. Whenever you take up a perfect grape, there are nine ingredients in that grape, and then its perfection is assured." I said to myself, "How beautiful! nine ingredients to make a perfect fruit." The perfect fruit of the Spirit has its nine ingredients; may God give them all to you and me and to every member of the Church of Christ.

THE CHURCH OF CHRIST

God's Call to His Church

By the Rev. W. Fuller Gooch

THE CHURCH OF CHRIST

God's Call to His Church

TWO things characterise all the themes which form the subject of the Word of God as a revelation addressed to His Church. The first is *reality*; the second is *actuality*. Both these things are utterly opposed to the spirit of the present age. In religious circles, as well as in other circles, we are living not in an age of reality, but very largely in an age of shams. And we are not living in these days—I am speaking broadly now—in religious circles so much in an atmosphere of actuality, as we are of indifference and ease. This is, alas! the secret of the terrible depression by which the professing Church of God to-day is marked, wherever it is found.

God's teachings in His word for His Church are very real. Every single teaching that is in this Book comes from the Holy Spirit, and, as coming from Him, every bit of teaching in this Book is *actual* as well as *real*; it is intended to be put into earnest, definite, continuous, diligent practice. If the Church of God could only rise in these days to the conviction of these two facts, we should begin to see the return of power in our midst! When we speak of the call of God to His Church, and of the indwelling of the Holy Spirit, there are many people who regard such themes

as mere theological terms, and, looking upon theology with something of disdain and indifference, relegate these things to the realm of mysticism, and think of them as of little value to a world where the material and the external are made so much of as in our day. Sometimes I wish we could get rid of the word theology, just because it is so much misunderstood, and so misrepresented. Of course, if you understand by theology the actual word of God, the teaching of this Holy Book, it is all right. But theology now is mainly made up of the ideas of men, the varied teachings and tenets of every school of thought; and we need to get rid of these things far more than we are at present able to do, and to return to the one question as to our spiritual life and duty, "What saith the Scriptures?"

There is nothing more real in the whole circle of evangelical truth than the call of God to His Church. I do not know anything more actual in the politics of the Holy Ghost—I mean the activities of the Holy Ghost—than the unity to which God calls us, and which has so much to do with spiritual prosperity, and the advance of truth in the world.

There is a passage of Scripture to which I will refer you as embodying one or two thoughts to which I would give expression. In Eph. iv. 1–4, the apostle says, "I therefore, a prisoner of the Lord, beseech you that ye walk worthy of the vocation wherewith ye are called, with all lowliness and meekness, with longsuffering, forbearing one another in love; endeavouring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace. There is one body and one Spirit, even as ye are called in one hope of your calling." Our salvation originates—in its individual experience and

application—in a direct, definite, distinct call from God, addressed to our inmost soul. Anyone who is a real child of God has been called by the grace of God personally into that position, has been called definitely, by the operation of the Holy Spirit through the Sacred Word, as Zacchæus was called distinctly and definitely when Christ stood under the boughs of the tree and summoned him to come down to His feet; and just as distinctly and definitely as when the Saviour called Matthew to come and follow Him. If you and I are His disciples to-day, we have been personally called to that high and holy position. Every Christian life—let me remind you, as I come on to the point at issue—involves a distinct vocation. Yes, and to the man to whom the call of God has come, the Christian life to which that call has summoned him is the first, the chiefest, the most important object set before him. He may have a profession, he may have a business, he may have various duties to fulfil in his spheres of life, but they are all subordinate to the fact that God has called him, summoned him to a high and holy privilege, to be the saved servant of the Lord Jesus Christ.

God's call to His Church has great issues, and wondrous possibilities. Let me just specify three or four of them without dwelling upon them. You are called to holiness, called to be holy, even as your Father which is in heaven is holy. You are called to liberty, to freedom from the power of sin, as well as from the guilt and curse of it. You are called to be the free men and free women of the Lord Jesus Christ. You are called to eternal life, you are called to God's kingdom and to God's glory, you are called

"to inherit a blessing." What a dignity all this gives to God's call to His Church! It is no mere theological figment, it is no mystical impractical sentiment, but a definite thing of life, calling to priestly service here, and eternal glory hereafter. The all and acme of human life is found in this: God has called me, and called me with salvation in the sound.

God's call to His Church, again, is very grand in its character—it is *holy*, *heavenly*, *high*. Oh the dignity belonging to the Church of Christ! Rank passes for much, position passes for much in this material world of ours to-day. But what is the highest social position the world knows compared to being a prince amongst the princes of God, compared with being a child of God and an inheritor of the kingdom of heaven? We belong not to earth. The Church has its earthly duty, its earthly position, but its citizenship is heavenly, its work is heavenly through and through; for even though it be a servant in drudgery working for the glory of God in the meanest sphere, if done to the glory of God there is something linking it with Him, something which raises it to the highest place that human nature can, by the Spirit of God, be enabled to occupy. I want to heighten your idea of the great, tremendous fact that, because you are Christians, you are called of God. There is a summons for you from the heights of heaven, there is a cry coming down from the heights of the Eternal Throne to you in your home, to you in your business, to you in your ecclesiastical circle whatever it may be. God wants you, God summons you, and just because you are a part of His Church He cannot leave you out of the reckoning in the calling which He has given,

and is giving, by His sacred word day by day, hour by hour. Oh to have our ears attuned to that voice divine, which is ever calling us, ever inviting us, ever asking something of us, ever commanding us in the spheres we occupy, because the Lord has need of us. The apostle says in one of his epistles, " Ye see your calling, brethren." Do we see it ? Numbers of Christian people rarely think about it. Their thoughts rise very little, if any, higher than just their own circle, or just whatever position they take in relation to the sections and divisions of Christendom. We want to see our calling, to see how divine it is, to see how gracious it is, and to see how, just as the bud is full of a perfect flower, so that which the call of God brings to us to-day is full not only of the promise, but of the realities which shall develop into eternal glory. Did we see this we should listen more, did we see this we should obey more, did we see our calling we should rise higher, and we should devote ourselves more absolutely and unreservedly to Him who has called us to the fellowship of His Son Jesus Christ.

There are two points which I would fain urge as being a part of God's call ; because we are speaking to-day in connection with the Evangelical Alliance. These principles of which I am speaking, as constituting the call of God both in reference to the call itself and that to which the call summons us, do not exist for the sake of the Evangelical Alliance. Let me say, the Evangelical Alliance exists for the sake of them. The object of the Evangelical Alliance is not to formulate principles, but to gather principles from the Sacred Word, and then seek to emphasise them, to pass them on and further them in the experience and

practice of God's people. As you look at the passage in Eph. iv. which we read, there are, at least, two things very specially involved in the vocation of which we are asked to walk worthily. The first is Unity. The great point of the apostle's reference to walking worthily of the vocation wherewith we are called, in the Epistle to the Ephesians, is the development of the unity which he so beautifully denominates as the Unity of the Spirit. Am I right in saying that God from on high calls on Christians to maintain the Unity of the Spirit ?—to put their heart's endeavour into it as their aim ?

The Evangelical Alliance has existed for some sixty-two years to speak of this great privilege and this great duty, and to seek to help forward the manifestation of it among the people of God. Do we understand that the Spirit of God within us summons each one of us to the practice and the experience of the Unity of the Spirit ; that when we gather together to promote this, we are not promoting only something that a Synod or a Church Assembly has propounded or formulated. We meet in answer to a definite call from God, given to us with a definite purpose or object in life, upon which the Saviour's heart is set, and by failure to realise which we do more to grieve the Spirit of God by whom we are sealed unto the day of redemption, than we could by any other lack that there could be in our Christian character and Christian life. I am sure I am not exaggerating when I put the call from God to Unity on such a basis as that. We are called to recognise it as a fact already existing, that which has been made a fact by the Holy Ghost, who dwells in the Church, and in

every renewed heart to develop it. When God, in His Holy purpose, formed a Church which is the Body of Christ, one of the first thoughts about it that He had was its perfect Unity. All that He decreed, and planned, and purposed; every agency, every instrumentality that He set on foot for bringing the Church to pass in this dispensation of the Holy Spirit, was defined and has been throughout the ages in force for what? To forming a Body completely one, to forming a Church which should be on earth the manifestation of the Oneness of the Body of Christ, and which should be, throughout the eternal ages, the realisation of the Unity of the Spirit.

God calls us *to recognise* the Unity of the Church. Never mind what seeming divisions there are, never mind what sorrowful evils there may be—He calls us to recognise the Unity of the Body as a fact of His own constituting. He calls His Church not only to recognise it as a fact, but *to be conscious of it as an experience*. This is the heart of the matter. The Unity of the Church is not a thing of outward confederation. You may organise till doomsday—you will not bring about the oneness of the Church any further than each individual member of the Church is actuated by the love of the Spirit, and drawn one to another by the love of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord. You may try to love somebody, but, if you have to do it as a task, the very trying makes it so perfunctory that you cannot get into the love. No, the heart must go out in kindly act, in faithful submission to God's leading and to the Spirit's teaching. Then love becomes the first-fruit of the Spirit of God in the development of Christian character and Christian

experience. You are called to it as an experience. "Walk in love, even as Christ also hath loved us." You are called to its practical development *as an active principle.* Yes, it is not a matter of option with you or me whether we will recognise the Unity of the Spirit, it is not a something that we have to exercise choice about. If it is a call from God it is just a definite step that we have to take. If we would walk in line with the Saviour, then we must keep on taking it, and pursuing it as a part of our spiritual vocation. I was reading lately that beautiful little volume written by the Bishop of Durham which contains an exposition of the 17th chapter of the Gospel of St. John. Referring to the 21st verse the Bishop says this: "Exterior unity is assuredly not the idea and goal of this wonderful passage taken in itself. But let us not think that the idea of the passage has nothing to do with exterior unity. One thing, at least, is absolutely certain: Nothing more surely tends to make the world doubtful or indifferent about the mission of the Son of God and about the resting upon the Church of any distinguishing beautifying love of God, than the sight, as it is so perpetually presented to the world, of our unhappy divisions. And no thoughtful or prayerful Christian, accordingly, should think of these divisions as if they were good in themselves, being rather, as they are, a great and formidable evil. Rather he should weigh with deepening confession and humiliation their far-reaching effects, and spiritual deterioration upon the spirits which so lightly excuse and foster them, and the thorny barrier which they present to the faith of Christ."

The view of the Bishop of Durham is the right one.

The practical development to which we are called is not the development of iconoclasm. We are not called to unite in breaking up the teachings or forms of ecclesiastical discipline and polity which exist among us, to run here and there speaking evil of those who differ from us as to matters of Church government and arrangement. Thank God, our Christian calling is not a summons to interfere with each other's convictions, or rights, or principles; but it is a call to say that whatever differences of conviction there are, we are yet one in this deepest and highest conviction of all—that we are all one in Christ Jesus. I beseech every child of God to listen to this subject not as the idea of any School or Society or Alliance, but as the cry of Christ from the right hand of God, where He is gone, to intercede at the Father's right hand, saying, "That they all may be one as Thou Father art in Me, and I in Thee."

Then we have *one hope of our calling*. What is it? The apostle, in the 1st chapter of the Ephesians prays that the hearts of Christians may be enlightened to know "what is the hope of our calling." What is it that we need to be enlightened so deeply about? It is the coming again of the Lord. Our one hope is this, that we are soon going into His presence; that before long the call of grace will be followed by the call to glory; that ere long we who have been following the divine summons on earth shall be summoned to the presence, *the parousia*, the glorious Apocalypse of our great God and Saviour. What a unity it is to have such a hope, and to have it as the one hope of our calling. Yes, we are called to it, as he goes on to say, "in the bond of peace."

In this vocation wherewith we are called, and of which we are entreated to walk worthy, there is only one faith—not only one Spirit, not only one baptism, not only one hope, but *one faith*. What is it? I know, and you know, that the faith which apprehends and appropriates Jesus Christ as our personal Saviour, is the faith by which we are saved. Every believer has to exercise personal faith in the Redeemer, believing on Him that salvation may result. But that is not the faith the apostle speaks of. The one faith is the revelation of God given in the Sacred Volume. The "one faith" represents here not so much the experience of faith, but the object, the basis, the warrant on which our faith must rest. The call of God is to maintain or keep the Unity of the Spirit. One essential element of that Unity is the faith which St. Jude tells us was "once for all delivered to the saints." Who delivered it? Where does the common faith of the people of God come from? From the Sacred Scriptures, from the Inspired Books which go to make up this Word of God. We have no other authority, we have no other manual or text book, we have no other foundation on which to build or authority to which to bow. If this Book is not secure, no foundation is secure.

Mark the faith which this Book contains as a revelation from God is the foundation on which the Church of God is built. "Built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets," I need not remind you, does not mean the apostles and prophets as men, but upon that which they as holy men, moved by the Holy Ghost, wrote and spoke for the guidance and the instruction of the Church. You cannot maintain

the Unity of the Spirit and deny this Book, you cannot maintain the Unity of the Spirit and cast aside anything that is taught within its records. Those of us who on this platform have known something of the conflicts of the Church in the past quarter of a century will remember that twenty-five years ago we were told that we must modify our forms of expression, we must alter the formularies and creeds, we must see that the phraseology was changed, and we were told that if we would change our forms of expressions and alter our phraseology to suit the coming twentieth century, then we might keep the truths as they were once given to the apostles of old. There were not a few who saw what this meant. There is a sense in which it was true. The phraseology of two hundred years ago is not adapted in everything to the phraseology of to-day. But what has happened? The changed phraseology, the altering the formularies, and the changing of creeds to suit the modifications of modern thought has led to—what? To give up the truths themselves, and to-day we have New Theologies, and the Apostle Paul's teachings spoken of as the opinions of Paul, and as personal theories which the twentieth century is at liberty to critically judge, and to overthrow and cast aside.

Let me again assert that God's call to His Church is to maintain the Unity of the Spirit. You cannot alter a doctrine that is in that Book, as it is there affirmed, and maintain the Unity of the Spirit. You cannot change the doctrines of the apostolic word and answer at the same time the call of God from heaven to your soul. You must be a traitor to the call of God to His Church, unless you are loyal to the

Scriptures of His truth. A choice has to be made. We are summoned on every side to-day to surrender our faith in apostolic truth, and to accept for doctrines the commandments and teachings of men. Men are popular to-day as they will give up the Old and come forth with the New. But the faithful Christian, the soul that answers the divine call, and the soul that desires to meet its Lord with joy and to receive His "Welcome" and His "Well done," must be careful to say to every doctrine of Scripture, as the Holy Ghost brings it home to the heart, the conscience, and the mind, "Yes, Lord, so I believe, so by Thy grace will I teach; to that will I be conformed, by that will I hold fast."

I pray God that the result of this conference may be such a standing up for the Unity of the Spirit, and for the faith which God has given to us for our salvation, as shall lead to a great increase of power, as by the Spirit of the Lord.

THE CHURCH OF CHRIST

Its Protestant Heritage

By the Rev. Preb. Webb-Peploe, M.A.

[*Not revised by the Speaker*]

THE CHURCH OF CHRIST

Its Protestant Heritage

TO be really one as a body in Christ Jesus involves, perhaps, a good deal more than any of us have really thought of, and looking at the title of the subject entrusted to me it would seem as if we were being taken out of the spiritual into the contentious; that, instead of affirming truth, we shall rather be denying the statements of others. Such judgment may be partly right, and it may prove to be essential that we should, more or less, allude to what we believe to be the evil sayings of those who are perverting the truth of God. Otherwise, there would be no place for this Alliance. We are only called into existence, and kept in existence, by the fact that the truth of God is not acceptable to all, and that what we believe to be some most important teachings of God's Holy Word have been too often sadly and widely rejected. Therefore it becomes essentially a duty for those who do believe and who hold these same truths, as gathered from Scripture, once again to affirm what they really believe to be the revelation of God. To that extent, we are contradicting those who oppose us, and to that extent our subject may be considered contentious. But when we speak of the Church of Christ and its Protestant heritage, by

the word *Protestant* we understand, I hope, not merely a set of negations. Too often it has been considered in that light, and many have objected, especially our High Church friends, to the word *Protestant* on the ground that they do not wish to quarrel with anybody, and that they would prefer to let others alone. Granting that it is not pleasant to be always contending against others, because you think them wrong, still we may safely make use of the word *Protestant*, and I think we do it with good authority when we remember the expression, ascribed to Archbishop Benson, that "the Church of our forefathers is Catholic, Apostolic, Reformed, and Protestant." When we make use of that last expression, we have no reason whatever to think of it as merely *protesting against*. If you protest, or affirm, you make your declaration positive, on account of certain truths which you hold. Again and again, with many well-known Church writers, we find the word *Protestant* taken into their lips, and used through their pens, with the intention of affirming positive sides of truth. I pray that we may be able to do the same, and that we shall go forth, not contending against any particular people, but only contending for the truth and for the "faith once delivered to the saints."

In order to do this I can hardly do better than refer your thoughts to the basis of the Evangelical Alliance, where we find there are positive truths much more than negations which as a body we are pledged to uphold.

The one thing that really unites people, and inspires them in any great crisis, is to have an ideal before

them. If we were simply saying "No" to theories and innovations, and simply taking up a negative attitude, our position would not be a strong one. But I would seek to put before you an ideal. The Ritualistic Party in the Church has an ideal. We have been told it again and again at Church Congresses, and Lord Halifax, especially, says he looks upon the thirteenth century as an ideal of Church existence, and as one that ought to be emulated by ourselves. I would revive the ideal put before us in God's Holy Word. We have to remember that we are but separate branches of one Church, and though we differ in matters of Church government, we have a basis of doctrine which, I hope, all of us would seek to hold at any cost. Let us ask ourselves whether we are prepared to affirm two or three such points as I shall now endeavour to enlarge upon.

First, "The Divine Inspiration, Authority, and Sufficiency of the Holy Scriptures." Speaking as a Churchman, as one who belongs to the Church of England, it is necessary for me to refer to the standards of that Church, though without dogmatising. But looking into the Articles of the Church of England, which every Christian clergyman of our Church has affirmed his faith in, and acceptance of, I find in Articles 6 and 20, two solemn statements; First, "Holy Scripture containeth all things necessary to salvation; so that whatsoever is not read therein, nor may be proved thereby, is not to be required of any man that it should be believed as an article of the Faith, or be thought requisite or necessary to salvation." In the 20th Article we are told that no one passage of Scripture is so to be rendered as to

bring it into contradiction with any other. Those two standard thoughts I wish to impress upon you.

If we take the Bible from beginning to end, from Genesis i. to Revelation xxii., I hope we all acknowledge it to be the directly Inspired Word of God, and that we will not admit that any man who honestly studies that Book may speak of it as if it were merely a human production, or ask us to set aside our complete belief in the Divine Inspiration thereof. Some little time ago the Bishop of London called together a great number of missioners of the Church of England, about eighty of them, and he asked a Bishop of the Church and myself to come and speak to that audience, at Fulham Palace, on the subject of how to produce a deeper conviction of sin. This, of course, is the special thought of mission preachers throughout the length and breadth of the land. Some of the most notable missioners were there. To my astonishment and pain, the Bishop who preceded me started his address on that solemn subject with these words: "Accepting, as of course we all do, without hesitation, the fact as a fact that the early chapters of Genesis are but myth, I yet hold that in the third chapter of that Book we have as good a picture as can be presented to us of the subject of sin, and of the way in which it should be met." Now I for one most solemnly affirm that the early chapters of Genesis are *not* to be taken as myth, but as a direct and absolute revelation of God, with regard to things that absolutely happened. Instead of assuming that we have there what is merely pictorial, or parabolic, or imaginary, I affirm my own conviction, after fifty years' study of God's

Holy Word, that in this Book, from Genesis i. to Revelation xxii., we are to take every single word as coming direct from God Almighty, if we can only get at the original and put away any interpolation of man. In the Old Testament alone, with its thirty-nine books, there are no less than 1904 affirmations of this character: "Thus saith the Lord," "God said," "the Lord said"—words which imply that those words did actually come from the very mouth of God to the creature to whom He was pleased to give His revelation. I heard a Bishop, at the Pan-Anglican Congress, say, that "fifty years ago, we should have read the words, 'Thus saith the Lord God,' as if God Almighty really had spoken them, but we have come to a better understanding now, and we believe nothing of the kind." I stood up, and said I fully believed that every word to which was attached the expression, "Thus saith the Lord God," came directly from God Almighty Himself.

When I open the Book and find in the Pentateuch no less than 500 of these expressions, and in the Historical books 296, and that in the Prophetical books those expressions occur no fewer than 1111 times, I set myself a short time ago to think, How much of the Book would that involve as coming direct from the mouth of God, if the writers are to be trusted? I asked a lady, a member of my congregation, to study that question for me. Of course, there are passages in which it appears a little doubtful whether the words have to be taken as words of God, or not. But, taking a clear and positively unexaggerated idea of the whole, I found that two-thirds of the Old Testament Scriptures come to us as being

direct revelation from God, under the headings of "God said," or "Thus saith the Lord." Taking the first chapter of Genesis, which we are told to cast aside deliberately, I find in that one single chapter no less than ten times the expression, "God said." I ask myself, Did God say it? If not, the whole is a fabrication, and I am committed to what I must believe to be a lie. But, if I understand that the Bible was written by the teaching of God the Holy Ghost, and that the expression, "God said," occurs ten times in that chapter, I say to myself, God did say these very words, and they are the very utterances of God recorded in that chapter. And so throughout the whole of that Book. In the one book of Ezekiel you have, nearly two hundred times, the expression, "Thus saith the Lord God." It is impossible for us who read such a revelation as that to throw it aside as being compounded by man, because the revelation, to us, is as coming direct from God. So I believe, as stated in the Evangelical Alliance basis, that the whole of the Old Testament absolutely comes to me as revelation from God. Then when I turn to the New Testament, I need hardly say that I hold even more strongly, if possible, that it comes directly from the Holy Ghost. I wonder whether we are aware that nearly four hundred times (according to Canon Liddon) the Lord Jesus Christ has referred to the Old Testament Scriptures, and accepted them as directly from His Father. I wonder if we are all aware that, again and again, the Lord Jesus Christ made the Bible, as He had it then, His standard of authority upon everything while He was here as man, and that He promised the guidance of the Holy Ghost to those

who should take up the work of the Church after He had left. And so, in the Epistle to Timothy, it is declared by St. Paul that "All scripture is given by inspiration of God." I will not accept the modern rendering for one moment—"All scripture that is given by inspiration of God is profitable." That is a contradiction, for it stands to reason that all Scripture given by inspiration of God is profitable. The apostle is unquestionably saying there that all Scripture is given by inspiration of God. Then he charges home upon Timothy—and we may do so for ourselves—"Preach the word, be instant in season and out of season." Let us take care that we do teach the word and nothing else, let us see that we are not ashamed to uphold it in all its integrity, and let us maintain that the sufficiency of Holy Scripture is absolutely proved, that its authority is nothing more or less than the God Himself, and that it is found by those who study it to be "the power of God unto salvation to everyone that believeth."

Let us recognise what is the power of God in His Holy Word. As an instance in point perhaps I may mention something connected with my old Herefordshire parish before I came to London. There were two men whom I could call upon in my prayer meeting more than any others to take part in prayer, and whose words always filled me with admiration and respect. They were not Churchmen nominally, though they came to my church regularly; they were both known as Primitive Methodists. They gave expression in prayer to what seemed to me far and away beyond what you could have possibly expected from their earthly position. One of them

was earning nine shillings a week, and the other twelve shillings a week as a gardener. At the age of twenty-one, when unable to write a single letter, this gardener was converted. I asked him how he learned so much of the Bible. " You see," he said, " after I was converted I was always thinking that my Heavenly Father could not speak to me because I could not read, and I thought that was shabby and unfair, and so I sat up till three o'clock in the morning " —he had to be away at six o'clock to his garden— " and I studied the Bible and taught myself to read." When driving round to say good-bye to some of my parishioners, on leaving Herefordshire, I saw this announcement : " A lecture will be delivered by John Jenkins, on Sunday evening next, in the Methodist Chapel, on " The Rivers of Egypt and their Spiritual Interpretation." I thought, How is this ? Whence did it come ? Simply, absolutely, and only from a study of God's Holy Word, and then a little geography added. We have yet to learn what God can teach to those who study His Book, and who do it faithfully every day through life.

What else shall we affirm is required by our basis ? I will only take up " The Divine Institution of the Christian Ministry, and the obligation and perpetuity of the ordinances of Baptism and the Lord's Supper." In doing this, I come to somewhat difficult and contentious ground by necessity, for this reason : that both the Church of England ministry and, I fear, the ministry of other denominations, are being painfully affected by those two subjects. We have seen that divine inspiration, and the sufficiency of Scripture, with its absolute authority, is most shamefully

attacked at present both in the Church of England and by others outside it, whether from the point of view of the New Theology, or from a metaphysical point of view. We have heard, lately, so much concerning the human in the Book as to make us feel that the Divine is almost entirely out of sight. We are allowed, by those who set up as new teachers, to tear the whole Book to pieces, and then to say that what it contains is not the power by which people are made Christians; that there are very few if any who are made Christians through the Bible, but that the Bible furnishes us with a basis and standard of criticism. That is what a great Oxford Professor said.

Now I pass to the other side—to the Sacraments. I find that the Evangelical Alliance lays down most solemnly what we all profess to hold—that we have the divine institution of the Christian ministry, and the beauty and blessedness of spiritual help in the Sacraments which the Lord has provided. But we must rest them upon the authority of Holy Scripture, for "whatsoever is not found in Holy Scripture is not to be required of any man as being necessary unto salvation." What is being taught us in the present day? First, that no man may dare to take upon himself the province and privileges of the Christian ministry unless he can be sure that he has received that ministry through an Apostolical Succession which has come straight down from the time of St. Peter; and that to be without the Apostolical Succession disentitles any one from entering the Christian ministry. Though I am a member of the Church of England, and rejoice in her privileges and opportunities

and rites, I stand here to affirm that I believe that to be a cruel piece of one-sided dogmatism. No man has a right to say that the ministry of other Churches is not as powerfully blessed by God and as helpful to souls as our own. The only thing required, with regard to the ministry, is, I believe, the spiritual teaching of the Holy Ghost, direct acceptance of God's Holy Word, and the choice and order with regard to men by those who are placed in a position in which they have a right to choose the ministry; and that then, whether it be in the Church of England, or in any of the denominations entitled Christian, so long as a man is spiritual and himself realises that he is called of God, I believe his ministry is exactly as prevailing and powerful in other denominations as in our own beloved Church. We are one in Jesus Christ in regard to the ministry, so long as men be chosen of God and redeemed; we are one in Christ whether we claim to be members of this Church or that.

But we cannot accept what is now put forward, not only by the Church of Rome, but, I grieve to say, by a very large number in our own beloved Church of England, with regard to the ministry —that it is not merely a ministry of God's Holy Word, but it is to be a sacrificial ministry in which the man who officiates on behalf of his people is actually offering a propitiatory sacrifice to Almighty God for the sins of the living and the dead. Such a doctrine as this we resist as having no place whatever in God's Holy Word. We are united as one, I am convinced, in upholding the simplicity of the Sacraments, and the beauty and benefit of the divine purposes in them, at the same time we will not, I hope

for one single instant allow that there is on the part of the ordained minister any function, or power, or privilege that concerns the sins of the people when he draws nigh to the table of the Lord, but that he is simply acting as a minister,—that means a *servant*,—simply as one who acts on behalf of others, and teaches them as God shall teach him, and that he does not place before God anything that avails for the sins of the people. This is, perhaps, one of the gravest points, and one of the most dangerous doctrines that are being so widely spread to-day.

Go back to the Reformation and ask what we obtained, whether we be Conformists or Nonconformists. What did we get through the Reformation? We got deliverance from the priesthood of men who asserted authority over the people, and affirmed that they had a right to interfere between the soul and its God. If we be faithful ministers, we charge every soul individually to take its position before God, and to let God alone, by His Holy Word and Spirit, be the Dictator and Master of that soul. We will never again, I hope, admit in our beloved land the power of the priest to interfere between the sinner and his Saviour, whether it be by a sacrificial act at the table, or by permitting him to bring absolution to the soul when the soul kneels before him in the attitude of confession. We say that man has nothing that he can offer before God. What do I find in God's Holy Word? While there are nine, or ten, different names for those who act as ministers of the gospel brought before us in the pages of the New Testament, never once does the term *priest* occur. We know it, but let us affirm it. We will not admit that the Greek

word for *priest*, one who officiates in a sacerdotal manner, can ever be rightly applied to the gospel minister. Consequently, he can have no power whatever, either to come before God on behalf of the sinner, or to come from God to the sinner with authority from above. He can only act as a minister, as a teacher, as a guide, and as a spiritual leader. He can have no authority whatever, except in this way, with regard to the Christian ministry. Lastly, what shall we say is really our privilege? Are we to say, as one of the great leaders of the Ritualistic Party said in the Barrow Church Congress, that "the principles of the Reformation are things to be repented of in tears and ashes"? Or are we to say, "Thank God, by means of that blessed Reformation, at the cost of our forefathers' blood, in many cases, we have been brought into a liberty that is absolute, that is perfect, that is everlasting"? The only thing we have to be sure of is, that that liberty never descends into licence, but leads us to the privilege of submission to the Lord Jesus Christ and Him alone. It is that to which I would bring your minds. The Christian minister ought hardly even to be thought of; he should be merely a voice of one crying in the wilderness, simply giving utterance to God's message of love to sinners, and leaving the soul at the end of the service to deal with God and Him alone. When we draw nigh to the Holy Table, the thoughts of the people should be centred upon the doctrine of the love and the perfect sacrifice of Christ. The man who officiates should be altogether forgotten and laid aside.

With this Protestant heritage, I wonder if it is possible, not only that a unity of spirit should prevail,

but that we may look one another in the face and be enabled to hope, even as against hope, that before I am called to give in my account as a minister, I may yet be enabled to see a reunion between all assimilating Churches who are one in doctrine—Presbyterian, Congregationalists, Baptists, and others —while they are still faithful to their distinctive principles so far as they can be—that we may yet live to see that the one Protestant heritage bequeathed to us by our fathers shall lead not only to tender forbearance but to the fellowship of believers in the Lord Jesus Christ, and even to external union. I do not know whether I shall be understood. It may be that my words may be misrepresented, but I thank God for what I believe to be the doctrine of the Prayer Book, together with that of the Bible, and while I hold to the Prayer Book I see nothing to prevent a greater approach from one body to the other than has yet been known in days gone by, and the hope that lies before me is this, that God may yet permit external union. If not, let us bear and forbear, let us live for one another, and let us look for the hastening of the return of our Lord Jesus Christ.

THE CHURCH OF CHRIST

Its Protestant Heritage

By the Rev. John Wilson

THE CHURCH OF CHRIST

Its Protestant Heritage

I SHOULD like to begin by endorsing Prebendary Webb-Peploe's desire for a greater manifestation of Christian unity. We are one in Christ Jesus, we cannot help being one; if we belong to Christ we inevitably belong to each other. The things that unite us are so much more than the things which separate us, and the things that unite us are so precious, so invaluable,—they are the vital things,—that the more we magnify them and rejoice in them, the more we must be drawn together. There is much in the meaning of the word *Protestant.* It, of course, protests against the evils of Rome, but more and more we want people to recognise how much is involved in our protest. Outside in the world it means, I am afraid, very little. I remember reading of a witness, before a judge, who said he was a good Protestant. The judge asked him how he was sure of that, and the witness said that he cursed the Pope and ate meat on Friday. That was the proof that he was a good Protestant, and the word means little more than this in the minds of some men and women. But to us it stands for spiritual freedom, for an open Bible, for the living Spirit of God, for the Crown Rights of the Redeemer. It is a word that we could

not easily exhaust in a brief speech when we know what it has meant historically.

It is, first of all, the *religion of Purity, not Corruption*. That is why we have the word. Have you ever tried to understand the inspiration of Luther's action? Luther was a quiet, humble man, seeking light upon his own path. He had no thought of reforming the world — he left that to others much higher than he, until there came athwart his path Tetzel with his scandalous trade, the selling of Indulgences, and some of Luther's flock came into the confessional to say that they had already obtained forgiveness, that they had purchased it. Then Luther was compelled to speak. He would gladly have been quiet; but how could he? Indulgences giving pardon for sin? Surely they were a futility and a mockery! It was impossible that this could be the religion of Jesus Christ. He thought, of course, that the authorities of Rome would not support Tetzel; and that he had only to appeal to them to have the sale of Indulgences stopped, and Tetzel silenced. But that was a mistake. The Pope and the authorities of the Church of that day supported Tetzel, and Luther had no alternative but to protest and to go back, not to the thirteenth century,—he found he could not rest there,—but to the first, to Christ and His apostles, and he said, "We have a religion here, pure at its spring." That is what Protestantism means—it means the purity of the truth as revealed to us in Christ and in His Word. A Free Church minister attended a service in the Milan Cathedral. It was on the anniversary of Carl Borromeo's death. There were displayed, on the altar,

any number of relics of the saint, and a great crowd of people gathered round to revere, if not to worship them. Mr. Morgan Gibbon said, "I stood with them, and I was willing to believe that they were looking beyond the relics to the saint and to the Saviour whom he served. But at that moment I turned to the window. The artist there had painted Jesus blessing the children, Jesus washing the disciples' feet, Jesus opening the eyes of the blind, and Jesus dying upon the Cross. That is a religion," he said, "that cannot be out of date, that is a religion which must appeal to the human heart and conscience for all time, a religion that is pure, and that comes down to us, as it was given in the early days, in the Word of the living God."

It is the religion of *Scripture, not Tradition.* I need say very little on that, but, if you and I wish to know what the religion of purity is we will not go to tradition. Tradition is later, tradition is hearsay, and hearsay is half a liar. We will go back to the written records, to the Word, and we rest upon that. We accept gladly—I do so as a Free Churchman—the declaration in the Prayer Book: "That nothing shall be required of any man to be believed, except what is found in, or can be proved by, the Holy Scriptures." But the Church of Rome does not rest upon that, the Church of Rome has never accepted the Bible as the standard of faith and practice. In the creed of Pope Pius IV., every Romanist binds himself to admit the Holy Scriptures in the sense held by the Holy See, and is not to interpret them otherwise "than according to the unanimous consent of the Fathers." So that, when I wish to know what the Bible

teaches, I have to ask what is the unanimous consent of the Fathers. That is a very large order! I do not believe there is any such thing. I have not been able to find it. But certainly it means that my pathway is a very long and difficult one. The IVth Rule of the Council of Trent enjoins that "No one is to read the Scriptures unless permission is given by the priest," and that is a permission we are not prepared to ask. The celebrated Protest by the German Princes contains the affirmation of their belief in the supreme authority of the Bible, and that it is to be interpreted not by tradition, *but by itself*. As Protestants we stand there. Rome says to us, "You must ask the Church's interpretation." This is to save us from division.

One finds plenty of division amongst those who accept the Church's interpretation as to what it actually says. But, the value of the Scriptures is this: that they not only supply us with the truth, but the discipline of mind which is profitable for instruction in righteousness; and with all its difficulties we want the discipline that develops and strengthens the human mind. Holland and England and Scotland have grown great—how? Because the human mind has been developed by the study of the Book itself. Are we to be saved by accepting the decision of others as to the interpretation of the Word? What stagnation, what corruption, has followed wherever the Bible has been withheld from the people. Go to France to-day, and ask M. Guizot, the historian of European civilisation, what is the cause of the political and social evils of France, and he answers, "Lack of faith." "And what is the remedy?" said his interlocutor. "The Gospel. Preach the Word. Circulate

the Scriptures." It is an old hackneyed phrase, but it is worth repeating, that "The Bible is the secret of England's greatness." It was when England became a people of one Book that England began to move into the position of first-rate importance amongst the nations, which she has retained until now. We want to read the Bible more—not to read about it. I believe that one cause of the decline to-day, the spiritual decline throughout our country, is just this: we are reading any amount about the Bible, but we are not reading the Bible for ourselves.

Protestantism is the religion of *Grace, not Works.* I can understand why Luther delighted in the Epistle to the Galatians. Dr. Forsyth said with equal severity and truth that the modern priest is a Jew in soul, and that modern priestism is really a kind of perpetuated Judaism, an attempt to bring in at the window the reign of Law which St. Paul, in Christ's name, turned out—at the door. That is true. The great cry of Judaism was, "Except ye be circumcised ye cannot be saved." Judaism believed in Christ, but it believed also in circumcision; this was to be added. And Sacerdotalism has always said, "We believe in Christ, but there is so much to be added." "Except ye fast, except ye do penance, except ye submit to the priest, ye cannot be saved." It is a denial of the sufficiency of the work of Jesus Christ. And that denial was soon found to be disastrous. Wherever there is a real consciousness of sin, we go back to the glorious Gospel of the Reformation, Salvation by Grace. "Saved by grace through faith, and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God." Luther could not accept anything else, be-

cause sin was a reality to him. He said to Staupitz, the Vicar-General, "I am a real sinner." Staupitz replied, "Wouldst thou be a sinner in appearance so as to have a Saviour only in semblance? No, Christ is a real Saviour of real sinners from utter condemnation." When we have to deal with men and women who know what sin is,—not a stage in the development of the human race, not a negation, not a blundering quest for God; but rebellion, lawlessness, iniquity,—when men know sin as an evil and bitter thing, they come back to the great Protestant doctrine of Salvation by Grace through Faith.

It is the religion of *Joy, not Fear*. A missionary was giving tracts away in a Roman Catholic quarter. A woman who took the tract said, "Is this about your religion?" "Yes," said the missionary. "Then take it back," was the reply; "I have trouble enough with my own." That is what religion means to a great many people. It is a trouble, a duty, a penance, something they have to do. But the religion of Protestantism is something done; "It is finished." Yes, your salvation and mine depends on what Christ has done, and done perfectly; He needs no one to add to it. He saves to the uttermost—can there be anything beyond Christ's uttermost? That brings into the heart what no Romanist knows, what no Sacerdotalist knows—joy. "Why," says the Council of Trent, "assurance of salvation is a vain and ungodly presumption." We say it is a delightful experience—

> "O happy day, that fixed my choice
> On Thee, my Saviour and my God!
> Well may this glowing heart rejoice,
> And tell its raptures all abroad."

No Romanist can really have a glowing heart; he lives in fear, all his lifetime subject to bondage. Is there anything more pathetic than Cardinal Manning asking his friends to pray for him? What for? That he might immediately pass into glory, "absent from the body, present with the Lord"? That he might depart to be with Christ, which is far better? No, but to pray that he might not pass into hell, but into Purgatory, where the tortures are as great as the tortures of the lost, only not of such duration. When I realise what the Reformation has done for mankind, I glory in the name of Protestant. The Countess Schimmelmann gives a description of her experience. She had been in despair and uncertainty for many weeks, until one day, as she read her Bible, God seemed to say to her, "It is not thy love to Me, but My love to thee that thy salvation depends on; not what thou hast to do, but what I have done." "Then," she said, "the sun of joy broke into my heart, in the beams of which I rejoice to-day, and shall rejoice for evermore." And, bless God, I have passed through that experience too, through despair, and uncertainty, and dread of death, into light and joy and blessedness. Death has lost its sting.

"Since Jesus is mine I'll not fear undressing,
But gladly put off these garments of clay;
To die in the Lord is a covenant blessing,
Since Jesus to glory through death led the way."

It is the religion of *Power—not Form*, "*having the form of godliness and denying the power.*" I do not say that many who have the form have not passed

through the form into fellowship with God. We are not prepared to affirm that. But, if they have, I should like to say to them what Paul said to the Galatians—" Received ye the Spirit by the works of the law, or by the hearing of faith ? " Did you receive the Spirit by all these fasts, and vigils, and penances ? or was it through faith in the Christ, the Son of God, the Saviour of men ? But one thing is certain : multitudes have the form who know nothing of the power. I have spoken to men and women who were told that they were regenerated in baptism. They say they know nothing about it ; the priest had said so, but they had had no experience of regeneration. It was to them a form only. They have come to the table of the Lord, they have come to the Mass, and they have read these words, " Whoso eateth Me, even he shall live by Me." I have asked them whether they knew anything of a new life, and they have said " No " ; they were utterly ignorant of a new life. They could not say, like Paul, " I live, yet not I, but Christ liveth in me." Protestantism stands for Power. They had no consciousness of any such experience. The form means nothing, unless through the form there passes into the souls of men the redeeming, regenerating power of the Spirit of God. And what is true of the individual is true of the nation. Wherever this gospel goes it uplifts and elevates the people. I was rather amused when I read a book by Dr. Luke Rivington. Cardinal Vaughan in the preface says that " this nation of ours, that had been conspicuous for its religious unity during a thousand years, broke with the authority of the Holy See, and became a byword throughout Europe

for religious rebellion and sporadic dissent." A thousand years—from the sixth to the sixteenth century—England was "conspicuous for its religious unity." What was it conspicuous for? It had not advanced from the time of Alfred the Great, not from the time of the Venerable Bede, it had been a thousand years of stagnation, of superstition, and of death. And now is it a byword and a reproach? Ask Italy if England is a byword, or Spain, or Austria, or Belgium, or all the nations that remain under the authority of Rome whether the nations that have been emancipated are a byword, or a reproach. Those emancipated nations witness to-day, that it was the Truth which came to them from the Protestant Reformation that inspired, and developed, and ennobled them, and gave them the position which they occupy amongst the nations of the earth.

I feel, most of all, that as Protestants we stand for the Cross, *the Cross, not the crucifix*, but the Cross as the revelation of the love of God. "In the Cross of Christ I glory." May we realise more of the power of the Cross, and then go and tell it. Carlyle says that there is only one epoch in the history of Scotland, and that was the Reformation. That was what made Scotland. But there was a war, years ago, between England and Scotland, in which Scotland was defeated, when James IV. and the flower of the Scottish nobility were slain. Randolph Murray carried the news to Edinburgh, and he refused to say, as he passed through the streets, what the tidings were; they were too heavy. But when he reached the Town Hall, where sat the Provost and the

Councillors, he gave to the Provost the banner, and said—

"Aye, ye well may look upon it,
There is more than honour there,
Else, be sure I had not brought it
From the field of dark despair;
One by one they fell around it,
As the archers laid them low,
Grimly dying, still unconquered,
With their faces to the foe.
Sirs, I charge you, keep it holy,
Keep it as a sacred thing,
For the stain you see upon it
Was the life-blood of your King."

And to-day our forefathers, who fought and died for the Cross, hand the banner to us, and they say, when the Gospel of Christ is being explained away—

"Sirs, we charge you keep it holy,
Keep it as a sacred thing,
For the stain you see upon it
Was the life-blood of your King."

THE CHURCH OF CHRIST

The Church and the Holy Scriptures

By the Rev. Prof. James Orr, D.D.

THE CHURCH OF CHRIST

The Church and the Holy Scriptures

THE subject of "the Church of Christ and the Holy Scriptures" is a very important one, and it is, as I understand it, on the connection of these two things—on the need of the Scriptures for the Church, and on the estimate which the Church ought to place upon the Scriptures, and the use to which she ought to put them, I am to speak. I might state it otherwise, and speak of the need and indispensableness of the Scriptures for the Church. That is unquestionably a very pressing question at the present time. There is no disguising the fact that we live in an age when, even within the Church, there is much uneasy and distrustful feeling about the Scriptures—a hesitancy to lean on them as the authority, and use them as the weapons of precision they once were, with a corresponding anxiety to find some surer basis, be it in external Church authority, or, with others, in Christ Himself, or in the Christian consciousness, for Christian belief and life. We hear very often remarks about the Protestant substitution of an infallible Bible for the Romish dogma of an infallible Church, and the implication is that the one idea is just as baseless as the other. Sometimes the ground is taken

up that the idea of an authority external to ourselves must be wholly given up: only that can be accepted which carries its authority in itself by the appeal it makes to reason or to our spiritual nature. This last, I would only remark here, is a proposition which is either true or false, according as we interpret it. In the sense frequently intended, it leaves the Scriptures—as, indeed, it would leave Jesus Himself—without any authority for us, save that with which our own minds saw fit to clothe Him or them.

There is, however, it is proper to point out at the beginning, a considerable difference between the idea of an authoritative Scripture, and the idea of an infallible Church or infallible Pope, in the Roman sense. It may be a clever antithesis to say that Protestantism substituted the idea of an infallible Book for the older Romish dogma of an infallible Church; but the antithesis, unfortunately, has one fatal inaccuracy. The idea of the authority of Scripture is not younger but older than Romanism; it is not a late invention of Protestantism, but is the original conception that lies in the Scriptures themselves. It is a belief which was accepted and acted on by the Church from the first. The Bible itself claims to be an authoritative book—if you will, an infallible guide to the true knowledge of God and of the way of salvation; and this view is implied in every reference made to it, so far as it then existed,—that is, to the Old Testament Scriptures,—by Christ and His apostles. That the New Testament—the work of apostles and apostolic men — does not stand on a lower level than the Old Testament in point of inspiration and authority, hardly needs arguing. In this

sense, as a body of writings of divine authority, the books of the Old and New Testament were accepted by the Church of the post-apostolic age. Take the writings of any of the Early Church fathers,—of an Irenæus, a Tertullian, an Origen,—you will find these pages saturated with references to Scripture; you will find also these Scriptures treated in precisely the same way as they are used in the believing literature of to-day, namely, as an ultimate authority on the matters of which they speak. I even do the fathers an injustice in this comparison, for I find things said and written by teachers of the Church to-day about the Holy Scriptures which these early fathers would never have permitted themselves to utter.

The fact remains that it has become fashionable among a class of religious teachers to speak disparagingly of, or belittle, the Holy Scriptures as an authoritative rule of faith for the Church. It is useless to deny that a leading cause of this has been the trend which the criticism of the Scriptures has assumed during the last half century and more. I do not speak here specially of those whose philosophical or rationalistic standpoint compels them to take up an attitude of negation to supernatural revelation, and necessarily to books of Scripture which profess to convey such a revelation. Criticism of this kind has, of course, also to be reckoned with. In its hands, everything is engineered from the basis of a denial of God's supernatural interposition in the history of mankind, with the necessary result that whatever in the record affirms or flows from such supernatural interposition is expunged or explained

away. The Scriptures, on this showing, instead of being, as undeniably they claim to be, the lively oracles of God, become simply the fragmentary remains of an ancient Jewish literature, the chief value of which would seem to be the employment it affords to the critics to dissect it into its various parts, to overthrow the traditions of the past in regard to it, and to frame ever new, ever changing, ever more wonderful theories of the origin of the books and of the so-called legends they contain.

Leaving, however, such avowedly rationalistic criticism out of account, it must be felt—whether felt or not it is certainly the case—that there is an ominous change of attitude on the part of many teachers who still sincerely own faith in a supernatural revelation of God. I find it difficult to describe this tendency; it is attended by so many signs of an ambiguous character. Jesus is recognised by most who represent it as the Incarnate Son of God, though with shadings off into more or less indefinite assertions even on that fundamental article which make it sometimes doubtful where the writers exactly stand. The process of thought in regard to Scripture is one easily traced. First, there is an ostentatious throwing overboard, generally with some expressions of contempt, of what is the "verbal inspiration" of Scripture—a much-abused term. Jesus is still spoken of as the Highest Revealer, or Ultimate Revelation, of God, and it is allowed that His words, if only we can get at them,—and, on the whole, it is thought that we can,—furnish the highest rule of guidance for time and for eternity. But then criticism, we are

also told, must have its rights. The Gospels go into the crucible, and, in the name of Synoptical and Johannine criticism, are subjected to wonderful processes, in the course of which much of the history gets melted out, or peels off as excrescence. Jesus, we are reminded, was still a man of His generation, liable to error in His human knowledge, and the limitations in His conceptions and judgments have to be allowed for. St. Paul, alleged to be still largely dominated by his inheritance of rabbinical and pharisaic ideas, is not a teacher we can follow farther than our own judgment of Christian truth leads us. If these things are done in the green tree of the New Testament, it is easy to see what will be done in the dry tree of the Old. The conclusions of the advanced school of critics are here generally accepted as once for all "settled," with the result that the Old Testament is immeasurably lowered from the place it once held in our reverence. Its earlier history—down to the age of the Kings—is largely resolved into myths, legends, fictions; is ruled out of the category of history proper. Its laws lack divine authority. Its prophecies are the utterances of men who possessed, indeed, the Spirit of God, but only in fuller degree than other good men and religious teachers in all countries and ages have possessed the Spirit, not as qualifying them to give real predictions, or bear authoritative messages from God to men. The word "inspiration" is retained, but is so much lowered to suit these revolutionary conceptions of Scripture that I honestly fail to see what special place or function is left for it. It is not, assuredly, the kind of inspiration which prophets or apostles of old claimed for

themselves, or which Jesus and His apostles ascribed to the Scriptures they used.

In this whirl and confusion of theories about Holy Scripture, is it any wonder that many should be disquieted and unsettled, should feel as if the ground on which they had been wont to rest was going away from beneath their feet? So the question comes back with fresh urgency, What is to be said of the place and value of the Holy Scriptures in the Church of to-day?

Now, I must frankly say, speaking for myself, that, if the contentions just outlined were in the main to be accepted as accurate, I do not think that much *would* remain of abiding value. It is in my judgment sincerely to be regretted that so much of this modern criticism of the Scriptures, which really had its origin in a different atmosphere, and is nourished from another—a rationalistic—root, has been taken over, praised, and in its chief results accepted, by writers who are themselves far removed from its ultimate standpoint in their own belief. It seems to me, the more I see and read of this "modern" trend in the estimation of Scripture, that much progress will not be made in the accomplishment of the ends for which the Church exists while this under-valuation of the Scripture lasts; and that one of the clamant needs of our time—a primary need of the Church—is just a replacement of Holy Scripture, with due regard, of course, to any really ascertained facts in regard to its literary history, in the faith and lives of men as the truly inspired and divinely sealed record of God's revealed will for men in the great things of the soul. But then, is such a position tenable? In the fierce

light of criticism that beats upon the documents, and on the revelation of God's grace they profess to contain, can this position be maintained? I venture to think—indeed I am sure—it can.

Criticism attacks the external form of the narratives, and there are few who are capable of entering into the intricacies of critical argument. But there is something deeper than external form on which it is possible for the humblest believer to form a judgment which will perhaps carry him farther into the heart of the subject than any amount of critical learning would do—by neglect of which, in truth, the ablest critics go continually astray. The one thing criticism can never expunge from this Book which we call the Bible is its character as a continuous, coherently developing, self-attesting discovery to man of the mind of God regarding man himself, his sin, the guilt and ruin into which it has plunged him, and over against that, the method of a divine salvation, the outcome of a purpose of eternal love, wrought out in ages and dispensations of progressive revelation, and culminating in the mission, life, death, atoning work, and resurrection of His Son Jesus Christ, and in the gift of His Spirit to the Church and believers. Here also is a fact—the biggest and most solid fact in the universe—a fact patent on the face of Scripture to any one who reads with open eyes, intertwined also with ages of Christian experience, with enduring institutions, with efforts and achievements which furnish a perennial proof of its reality. With this fact the Church as an institution stands or falls. So long as this fact stands, the Church will stand—and that will be to the end. But so long again as

this fact stands, the Scriptures also will stand. For it is the Scriptures which, in their divers parts and divers manners, embody and convey to us this revelation of God, and, by the verifiable presence of this revelation in them, the Scriptures are proved to be, what they claim to be, the living and inspired oracles of God.

Here, then, it seems to me, within Scripture, not outside of it, — within this grand, cathedral-like interior of divine revelation,—within this massive, comprehensive, divinely unique plan of God's salvation for a world of sinners,—we must take our stand, if we want to recover lost ground in regard to the Scriptures. We are here at the heart,—the centre,—not at the circumference; at the citadel, not at the outworks. Against the great fact of which we here gain assurance, the waves of a critical scepticism will assuredly beat in vain. If faith in the Scriptures grows weak, it will be because faith in this central meaning and purpose of the Scriptures has become obscured. Increasingly am I convinced that failure to do justice to the Scriptures is generally connected with failure to do justice to the gospel they contain.

But how, it may be asked, does faith in the revelation give back faith in the Scriptures, or re-establish the Scriptures in their lost place of honour, authority, and value in the Church? I can perhaps best answer that inquiry, and indicate my own point of view, by putting some questions in my turn. Here are a few :—

1. Assuming a true revelation to be given us by God, could such a revelation be preserved without a pure Scripture?

2. Granting Christ to be the culmination of divine revelation, what could we know of Jesus without a faithful Scripture ?

3. Assuming the Church to be an institution of Christ, what could we know of the foundation, laws, sacraments, doctrine of the Church, without an authoritative Scripture ?

4. Assuming that the Church has a mission to the world, how could the Church carry on the propagation of the gospel and the evangelisation of the world, without a trustworthy Scripture ?

5. Assuming the end of salvation to be holiness, and growth in knowledge and grace in the believer, how could spiritual life be perceived, described, and Christian character be built up, without an inspired Scripture ?

I have asked, as lying at the foundation, how, assuming that God has willed to give to the world an authoritative revelation of the character described, such a revelation could be preserved without a pure Scripture ? Allow all you please to the principle of oral tradition,—and I do not dispute the use that can be and has been made of oral tradition in the preservation of revelation in its earlier stages,—it is just as obvious that tradition has its limits as a safe medium for the transmission of revelation. So soon as the revelation leaves the original witnesses, gets spread abroad, becomes the property of imperfectly informed or less scrupulous men,—gets removed by a considerable time from its source,—it all but inevitably becomes corrupted, receives unauthorised additions, loses its freshness and vitality, and often is in danger of perishing altogether. Against this

there is but one sure preventive, namely, that so early as such danger becomes imminent, the facts or truths of the revelation should be reduced to written form by persons who can speak and write on them with authority. *Scripta manent*: what is written remains. A natural expectation, therefore, would be that, if a revelation is given in successive stages, a record also will be kept, or provided, of that revelation, either by the immediate recipients—*e.g.* prophets, apostles—or by persons who stand within the circle of the revelation, and possess in an eminent degree its Spirit. To these also will be entrusted the task of placing on record the earlier stages of revelation, as that has been handed down in the line of a chosen seed by unwritten tradition. This, it seems to me, is just what we have in the Bible. Such a statement, it is true, says nothing of the nature or degrees of inspiration, of questions of inerrancy in details, etc.; but it implies this, that, if the record is to serve its purpose, it must purely and faithfully embody the revelation, must not distort, pervert, or falsify it, must preserve it in its fulness and purity; and if any one will show me how this can be attained without a quite special inspiration of God, I shall be thankful to him for the information. But has the thing actually been done? For the proof of that I appeal to the Book itself which contains the revelation. The revelation, I claim, is *there*,—stands out clear, sure, self-attesting, organic, irrefragable,—and this, the fundamental fact, of itself guarantees the fidelity of the record that enshrines it.

This general statement I apply next to Christ and the Gospels. Critics have actually got so far

as to believe that the image of Christ in the Gospels could be the creation of legend-mongers of the first or second centuries; that not only the incidents of His life, but His very sayings and parables could be invented and put into His mouth by a later generation. The Church, in short,—a Church with no real supernatural Christ behind it,—created Christ, not Christ the Church. Can this paradox be maintained to the satisfaction of reasonable minds? I venture to affirm it can not. That divinely unique Figure in the Gospels was not—could not be—a human invention. Those words of truth and power,—of originality so marvellous, of wisdom so profound,—even yet so high above the apprehensions of mankind,—could come only from one source: Christ Himself. We are told to turn from the Scriptures to Christ. I am reminded of the story of the artist who painted the picture of a curtain on his canvas so perfectly that a friend asked him to draw aside the curtain that he might see the picture. The artist had to explain that the curtain was the picture. When I am told that I am to go from the Gospels to Christ, I ask —What do I know of Christ except from the Gospels? And when I am further asked—Well; but how do you know that the Gospels give you a true picture of Christ? I answer, the picture itself is the guarantee. No human brain invented that picture; no human ingenuity clothed the idea of Christ with these historic incidents, or traits, or words: the image that is there guarantees the truth of the record that presents it. The Gospels reveal Christ; Christ guarantees the Gospels.

I might go on to ask—Without the Scriptures what

would the Church know of its foundation, of its laws, of its doctrine? but I dare say that is unnecessary. The question is best answered by looking at what a Church sinks down to when faith in the Scriptures is abandoned. The present is an age of untheological tendency. In my humble judgment, a Church without doctrine—which does not know its own mind, and is not prepared to state its belief in the fundamental verities of Christ's revelation—is a rope of sand, and will not long maintain even the semblance of holding together. The same is true of the Church's mission to the world. If the trumpet give an uncertain sound, who shall prepare himself for battle?

Last of all, there is to be considered the personal edification of the individual. "That the man of God may be complete, furnished completely unto every good work." This is the function which, it is declared, inspired Scripture is to fulfil. Will it be doubted that, if Scripture does fulfil what is here claimed for it, it must possess an inspiration as unique as the result?

Here then, I think, is ground that can be safely taken up in seeking to restore the Scriptures to their rightful place and value in the Church. Here, in this revelation, which is their very heart and essence, and which attests its reality in a myriad ways, is a sure foothold for the defence of the Scriptures, a starting-point for the profitable study of the Scriptures, a guiding clue to the meaning and purpose of the Scriptures, which nothing can take from us. This leaves open all inquiries as to human authorship, and relation of the different parts of

Scripture to each other, but it assures us of a Divine Spirit working in the whole to the production of a sacred Word fitted infallibly to make known to us the whole will of God for our salvation, through faith in Jesus Christ, His Son, our common Lord.

THE CHURCH OF CHRIST

The Church in the World—A Light Shining in a Dark Place

By the Rev. Canon Barnes-Lawrence, M.A.

THE CHURCH OF CHRIST

The Church in the World—A Light Shining in a Dark Place

AT the outset of my remarks I would bring before you two visions. The one (at the opening of St. Matthew's Gospel, the 5th chapter and the 13th verse) is a vision vouchsafed to our Lord Jesus Christ. Seated on a mountain at the opening of His ministry, He sees a number of people slowly climbing the side of the hill to the level place where He and His disciples are. Here are all sorts of men and women, with but one thing in common—they are despised by the world. Here are men broken in heart because of sin, here are men crushed by the sins of others, and downtrodden, here are men persecuted for righteousness' sake. It is a motley gathering. But, as they climb the slope, the heart of the Lord Jesus goes out to them. He yearns after them, and then, gazing onward into the future beyond, He says these wonderful words concerning them: "Ye are the light of the world."

The other vision is found in the close of the New Testament canon, in the 21st chapter of Revelation. It is the apocalyptic vision of St. John. In the Spirit he is on a mountain great and high, and sees the vision of the Holy City, the New Jerusalem, coming

down from God out of heaven. And as he tries to tell us what he saw, he pictures her light as the light of some glorious crystalloid gem, a light more wonderful than language can describe. "And I saw no temple therein, for the Lord God Almighty and the Lamb are the light of it." Wonderful is her influence, in her light the world is no longer dark: "The kings of the earth bring their glory and honour into it," and the nations walk in the light of it. The luminary of the City is the presence of the living God, but it shines in the hearts and lives of men. That City is the Church of Jesus Christ, the radiance is her teaching, her sacraments, the outshining of the lives of millions of her saints in every age.

It is not two visions, but one and the same vision from two different points of view. What the Lord saw and what His disciple saw are complementary one to the other, as is the germ to final fulfilment and development. On the one hand you see a poor despised throng clustered about the feet of the Master; on the other you see the completed Church of Jesus Christ in its place in the world, and the world blessed by it from one end to the other. God hasten the day when the vision of the apostle shall be translated into actual fact, and the light of the knowledge of the glory of God cover the earth, and all the world be light!

Now, if I mistake not, it is betwixt these two visions that we stand to-day. Our subject is apposite and suitable for the close of a conference like this: "The Church of Jesus Christ—a Light shining in a Dark Place." But what is the Church? I recollect how the learned Hooker tells

us — would that Churchmen would read Hooker to-day more than they do, and as they used to do in olden times — Hooker, I say, tells us that for lack of definition of this word *Church*, mistakes are committed neither few nor unimportant. I take, then, the definition which I find within the formularies of my own Church: in the 55th Canon of the Church of England stand these words: "Ye shall pray for Christ's Holy Catholic Church, that is, for the whole congregation of Christ's people dispersed throughout the world"; nor do I think that the Evangelical Alliance itself could formulate anything better or more scriptural than these words of our ancient communion. Let me repeat them: "The Catholic Church, that is, the whole congregation of Christ's people dispersed throughout the world." Now of this Church, which includes ourselves if we are really His, Jesus Christ said, "Ye are the light of the world." That is the Church's work—to give light to the world, to *be* the light of the world, and we ask—What are the conditions of its doing that work? The first answer must be *Visibility*. There must be manifestation. The Church in any given place must be *seen*.

Many of you are acquainted with the City churches, but may I ask if you know All Hallows Church, Lombard Street? It is one of the most beautiful of all the City churches. Its architecture, its wood-carving by Gibbon, are magnificent, but of the thousands that walk up Lombard Street, day after day, I do not suppose that one-half ever imagine that there is a church there. In fact it is called "the invisible church"! The one thing that the building lacks is visibility, it isn't seen by the world at large,

and the world at large is so much the poorer. The hard, commercial life of the City might be something softened if it could constantly enjoy the sight of so beautiful a house of God in its midst. The need of the Church of Christ to-day is manifestation, *visibility*.

In the 5th chapter of Ephesians St. Paul says: "Whatsoever doth make manifest is light." We all understand that. But it is not the equivalent of the Greek, and in the Revised Version the words are translated thus: "Whatsoever is made manifest is light." Whenever, and just in proportion as, the Church of Jesus Christ is made manifest to the world as *one*, one in its faith and hope and love, then there is light in the world. I was struck very much by the report of the recent Conference at Shanghai. No fewer, I believe, than fifty or sixty different Missionary Societies belonging to the Church of England and other Protestant Churches—because the Church of England is Protestant—were gathered together there for conference on the work of evangelisation, and they drew up a most remarkable resolution, stating their oneness of love one to the other in all things which are essential. The light of that conference has been felt in London—it has been felt, I believe, all over the Christian world. Whenever the unity of the Church of Christ is made manifest, there is light. We here gathered cannot tell the quiet good we are doing by our union the one with the other. We are made manifest as one, and there is light. At Blackheath, in our own little way, we are doing what we can to show practically and visibly before the world our unity; the Congregational minister and I every month meet in a large hall and hold a united service, which

is largely attended. We go out in the summer on to the Heath together, and have hundreds and sometimes a thousand gathered to hear the Gospel. That is a light which has, I humbly believe, done a great deal of good, and that quite apart from the evangelistic message we have endeavoured to give. Even in Blackheath there is some difference of opinion as to the Education question, but Churchmen and Nonconformists are all united heart and soul in maintaining the Word of God in our schools, though they find themselves on different sides as to how it is to be brought about. This union between a Nonconforming minister and myself has, however simple a thing in itself, been as a light. The Church has been seen, and the vision has knocked the bitterness out of the Education controversy, and out of some other things too, in our neighbourhood. Well, that is the first thing I want to say—we need *visibility*.

But the Church must not only be seen: it must be *felt*. An Evangelical Alliance is not worth anything, unless it is an Evangelistic Alliance. I do not believe in any use of that great word Evangelical unless it includes Evangelism. If you look in the 5th chapter of Ephesians and the 8th verse, you will see that St. Paul speaks to Christians thus: "Ye were sometimes darkness, but now are ye light in the Lord." What, then, are we to do? St. Paul insists that we are to act as light does, we are to dissipate darkness, to turn darkness into light wherever we are. Occupying a room, a short time ago, in a friend's house, I awoke in the middle of the night, and, to my surprise, saw a dull light on the other side of the room. I could not think what it was. Rising, I went to the mantel-

piece, and found there a luminous match-box. It had been standing in the light during the day, it had caught the splendour of the noonday sun, and all through the hours of the night it made darkness light; it was busy dissipating darkness for the poor man who sought a match. Well, if really evangelical, we shall be really evangelistic. There is need of us to-day. The world is very dark. When you think of how men's minds are perplexed on almost every question, surely it is our business to give light. The recent Pan-Anglican Congress has been a magnificent display, and has been most helpful from many points of view. It has fired the imagination, it has given us Churchmen a great sense of what we may do in the world, and a great many wise things well worth remembering have been said. The Congress has dealt with almost every imaginable subject under the sun, and the question certainly does come: "What is the Church for? Is it the business of the Church to deal with socialism, and sweating, and housing, and education, and the like?" Christian men are bound to deal with these matters. But, I ask, is it our business to deal with these matters as a Church? Is not the Church's business rather that of illuminating men's hearts with divine light, and so to fit them to deal with all those political and social problems with which they come in contact from day to day?

The further question arises: *Where* are we to shine? In the station lamp room, if you enter it in the evening, you will be astonished at the blaze of light. All the lamps have been lighted, and they make a fine show. But the lamps in the lamp room are not

meant for the lamp room, but to put in trains that are going through dark tunnels — into the night expresses. The place for the lamp is the darkness. And our business is not merely to sit and listen to expositions of the Gospel, but so to live Jesus Christ as to make our light shine wherever there is darkness. Talking to a domestic servant recently, I asked, "In your house, how many are there downstairs?" "Five servants, sir." "Are you all Christians?" "No, sir, we are not." "Are you the only one?" "Yes, I am afraid, the only one." "Well then, your business is to shine downstairs in the kitchen." The parable is obvious. It may be there are some who hear of heathen darkness in some distant part of the world. "Might not that be the place for me to shine?" You must ask yourself that question. But, whether or not, "Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven."

I close by pointing out those things which dim the light in too many cases. In that wonderful passage I began with, the Master warns us against three hindrances to the shining of the light. Some men, He says, put a candle "*under the bed.*" In the interpretation what is the bed? There come to my mind the words of M. Theodore Monod: "I have been looking," he said, "to see what is the secret of the Church being so little used in the world. I have been looking into the Greek Fathers, and I have been looking into the Latin Fathers, and I have at last discovered the secret why the Church is of so little use in the world. It is laziness." Yes, a great many people put their light under the bed. If you and I would shine, we

must be up early in the morning to have our quiet time with God, our quiet time of studying God's Word, and seeing God face to face before we see the face of man. I, too, believe that laziness lies at the bottom of the inefficiency of a great deal of Church life.

Again, our Lord said: "Do not put your light *under the bushel.*" What is that? Every housewife in Palestine has a bushel, a measure with which she gives to her household their portion day by day. To put one's light, then, under the bushel is to allow domestic or business anxieties to interfere with the Christian life. How many are, as a matter of fact, hindered in letting their light shine, not by unlawful pleasure so much as by lawful business! Private, domestic, and social obligations choke the spiritual life, and the light in us tends to become darkness. Yet again "*the secret place*" may obscure our light, and the words remind us that secret sin is always fatal to public witness.

The place for the light is "the lampstand," the common wooden lampstand invariably found in the Palestine house. I do not doubt that many a lampstand came from the quiet carpenter's bench where the Lord stood and worked in Nazareth. In the interpretation the lampstand is your position in society, your talent, your ability to do this or the other, that which distinguishes you from your neighbours, whatever it may be. Your position, your powers may alike be poor, but none the less they constitute you a lampstand, and so long as the light shines on the top of it, the material of the stand matters not. It does not matter, I say, how cheap

and common the lampstand, so long as it carries the lamp. That is our responsibility. Like Goethe, the world is crying out for light, more light,—and to us comes the Master's solemn word : " Ye are the light of the world." Let us so shine, God helping us, that the vision of St. John may be the more speedily realised, when the nations shall walk in the light of Christ's Church, and the kings of the earth shall bring their glory and honour into it.

THE CHURCH OF CHRIST

The Church's Duty in Home Evangelisation

By the Rev. Dinsdale T. Young

THE CHURCH OF CHRIST

The Church's Duty in Home Evangelisation

THERE are few studies that are more interesting and charmful than the study of words. I often think we miss a great spiritual benediction because we do not bring our thought to bear, and our imagination to bear, upon some of the great classical words of our religion. We miss their music and fragrance. Let us, then, spend a moment upon that word *Evangelisation*—to my mind a most melodious word—the promulgation of an Evangel.

Is it too elementary to ask this question: What is an Evangel? Good news. It strikes me, more and more, that one of the things which we forget, even in our Evangelisation, is that the Gospel is Good News. Frankly, you would not think it was from the way in which some of us tell it. And, to be equally frank, you would scarcely think it was from the way some people receive it; for, what a lot of gloomy-looking people you often find in the church listening to the Gospel. It is very uncomfortable to have to recognise such a fact, but sometimes salvation comes from recognition of unpleasant facts. But, thank God, the Gospel is what etymologically it means—Good News. I won't tell you to what Church I belong to, because we are not supposed to belong to any

particular Church in the Evangelical Alliance. But, in the Church in which I have the joy to minister, we sing an old hymn that has these lines in it—

> "The joyful news of sins forgiven,
> Of hell subdued, and peace with heaven."

If that is the Gospel message, is it not Good News? And Evangelisation is the telling of Good News—not any good news, not all sorts of good news. I venture to say that the pulpit will lose its power, and the Church will lose its spiritual prestige, if it is occupied with all sorts of good news. Our business is to tell *the* Good News which we call the Gospel, and to think for a few moments about the Church's duty. It has many duties. Forgive me if I say parenthetically that I am sometimes afraid nowadays it takes to itself too many duties. Its great duty, I submit, is Evangelisation, to tell to sinful and guilty men and women Good News. It is our business to tell that Evangel to heathen nations, and, thank God, the Churches are not forgetting that mission. But, to-night we have to look within a narrower area, that is yet not narrow, and we have to think of our duty at home, "Beginning at Jerusalem." That is still, as in the apostles' days, the starting point of Evangelisation. We are to begin at home; we are not to stop there, but we are to begin there. Is not there a danger of our forgetting that truism nowadays?

There are people who need the Good News; they do not know they need it. That is the tragedy of the situation. But the need is none the less deep because they are unconscious of it. Many of them do know their need, but whether they know it, or

know it not, the primary duty of the Christian Church is to tell them the Good News.

What is the Good News? Salvation. Forgive me again for being very elementary. What do we mean by the word, in that connection? We mean that simple faith, shall we call it simple reliance, shall we call it simple trust, shall we use the old word that the Puritans, the Early Evangelicals, loved so much—"Appropriation?" It is a grand word, the very essence of saving faith, to appropriate to ourselves through that process of faith, reliance, trust, appropriation. Every soul of man accepting Christ's atoning sacrifice may be received into the favour of God, may be made a child of God, and, in the deepest and grandest sense, an heir of the kingdom of heaven. That is the Good News we have to tell. That, I submit, is what we are all persuaded of. But, it is the things which we are persuaded of that we want inflaming. That is the difficulty nowadays. We believe these things, and we do not feel them with passion. I submit to you that the first duty of the Christian Church is to utter that Evangel at home. What classes there are who need that Evangel! Let us look along that line. Let me put the matter very plainly. How many unconverted people there are in all our churches! I sometimes hear friends in my own church—I will not involve any other church for the moment—discussing how they can get what they call the raw material into the churches. I sometimes venture to suggest that the raw material is in the churches—not in the degree we could desire, but there is far more raw material, spiritually, in the churches than any of us realise. It is very important

to go outside and compel them to come in, but there are people who are in who have not believed the glad tidings, who are not exercising a simple, penitent faith in the one Sacrifice that can for sin atone. We believe that salvation is by faith. We believe more than that, we believe it is by faith alone. That is the genius of Protestantism, that is the very core of the evangelical belief. *By faith alone.* I wish we had a few more Pauls in these days who would press that "alone." People say we are saved by faith, *plus*. We are saved by faith, plus nothing, we are saved by faith alone—not by faith with Ethicalism added, important as it is; not by faith with Orthodoxy added, vastly important as it is; not by faith with Ecclesiasticism added, very valuable as that is; but by *faith alone.* There was an old nickname that used to be applied to people who believed and preached that doctrine. They used to be called Faithalonians. I hope we are all Faithalonians, for still, as of old, that is the one Evangel. How many people there are who are, more or less, regularly attending all our churches, but who have never exercised that great transaction—putting a personal trust in a personal Saviour, and having an inward consciousness of their salvation through Christ's Atonement. We need to evangelise them.

Well then, the question arises, if I may be allowed to put it in so rough a fashion, Are we doing it? Some one started the inquiry in a religious newspaper a few years ago—I wish it would get started again now—Is the Gospel preached in the Churches? It is a startling question, and, I am afraid, if we were honest we should have to give a startling answer.

I am not here to criticise, but I am here to suggest this vital issue. Is it so in all our churches, our evangelical churches, that any man or woman who desired to hear the Evangel might safely reckon on hearing it at every service? Would they be safe in such a reckoning? The Gospel message, in that which many would call the narrower sense of the word, ought to be heard in our regular worship. Is it? In so far as I am at fault I would humble myself before God in this matter, and I would ask that we should all humble ourselves before God on this account. There is a far greater evangelical possibility in the regular services of the churches than many people have realised, and, I believe, there are some specific classes whose need is clamant to-day for our Evangelisation. What a need there is of Evangelisation among the educated, the cultivated! If I may say so frankly, is not a great deal of modern Evangelisation too partial? is not it almost lopsided? Thank God for the way we are evangelising what are called the lapsed masses, the submerged tenth, and what are called the working classes. But, are we evangelising the educated? Are we bringing the simple gospel of salvation by faith alone within the hearing of the cultivated classes of England as we ought to do? I believe no class is more pathetically neglected in modern Evangelism than that class. The late Dr. Dale, who was a great theologian and a great observer of the religious signs of the times, was constantly saying, in his closing years, that the churches were apt to forget now that clever people have souls to be saved as well as ignorant people, and that rich people have souls to be saved as well as poor people. I

venture to ask you to consider and make it a matter of intercession. Are we evangelising what are called the better classes of this country? I fear that no class, generally speaking, is more evangelistically neglected. There arises another class before our minds. Has not the Church a great duty resting upon it to evangelise the young people? Our families, the boys and girls, the young men and maidens of the churches—are we winning them for Christ? Are they growing up without having a definite conception of what the way of salvation is? It will be a terrible thing if we are saving the masses outside, and letting our nearest and dearest drift away from the gospel of the common salvation. The churches need to consider that.

Turn for a moment to another phase of the question. What are some of the best methods of fulfilling this duty of Evangelisation? The first and foremost method must be the method only that God Himself has ordained—preaching. I want to submit to you that the greatest need of the Modern Church is a pastoral Evangelism. May I venture to describe what I mean by that? In many churches we have excellent missions held periodically. We get brethren whom God has greatly honoured, whom we honour, and whom we ought to honour, and we ask them to come for a fortnight, perhaps less, perhaps more, and hold an evangelistic mission. One of these honoured brethren said to me in private conversation, "We are a necessary nuisance!" I do not like to own that, but I thought there was a great deal of truth in it. Of course the word nuisance should be used humorously. Christian people are all the better when they have a

grain of humour in their constitution; if they have not, they are living below their spiritual privileges. But you know the sense in which that brother used that word. Ought we to be as dependent as we are upon these brethren? I think of great Evangelists who were pastoral Evangelists, I think of some in the Church of England, noble clergymen, who, Sabbath by Sabbath, morning and night, whatever the varieties of their pulpit themes, always took care to evangelise their hearers. They were pastoral Evangelists, and such men are beyond price. I think of Spurgeon, surely the greatest preacher that this country has known. Was not it the glory of Charles Haddon Spurgeon that he was a pastoral Evangelist? Mr. Spurgeon did not hold missions Sabbath by Sabbath, but with a variety of topic that is an almost intellectual miracle as we look back upon it, he was always, whatever else he was, an Evangelist morning and evening. That is what I want to see raised up again in the Christian Church.

I want everybody to be safely able to forecast this: that whatever else he hears from the pulpit of the churches he attends, he will hear a plea made for the unsaved both morning and evening. It used to be a fashion for ministers to preach to the saints in the morning and to the sinners at night. But if we do that now, we shall miss some of the biggest sinners, for they do not come out at night. Mr. Spurgeon, to whom I have just alluded, preached some of his mightiest evangelistic sermons in the morning. But, morning and night, there should be an evangelistic note. Is there? That is a primary fulfilment of the Church's duty. Brethren, pray for us that every

minister may be an Evangelist in his own pulpit. If I had the courage and the authority to say it to my brethren, I would say, " Brethren, see that no man take your crown, the crown of pulpit Evangelism."

There are other methods. The Church is composed of individual members. I think that, just as in the State there are certain people who would relegate everything to the State, and forget that the State is made up of individuals, so, in the churches, there are some people who talk about what the churches ought to do, and they forget that it is only an aggregation of units. We must not leave Evangelisation to the minister. Every Christian is meant by Christ to be an Evangelist, and if a man says, " I cannot preach," I should be inclined to say, perhaps, " Thank God for that, my brother." There was a great deal in what a Puritan preacher said to a young man who desired to preach. He said, " My brother, do not you preach if you can help it." It was doubly true. John Bright said he thought it was an awful thing to be a preacher. So it is. If a man preaches for the salvation of the people who listen to him, and if he preaches that there is a hell to be shunned, and a heaven to be won, it is an awful thing to be a preacher. But nobody should preach if he can help it. There must be the " Woe is me if I preach not the gospel ! " But you are not released from your evangelistic obligation because you cannot preach. Cannot some people evangelise by the books they write ? Might not there be more evangelistic literature, might not some friends who have capable pens employ those pens for an evangelistic purpose without being at all sardonic ? But often evangelistic literature has been

more evangelistic than literary. Why could not we have effective literature with the pungency of an earnest Evangelism? Could not many of us evangelise by letter writing? I have known good men—I think of my own dear father, a Christian physician who never preached, but who never lost an opportunity of writing to people concerning their soul's salvation. What scope there is for epistolary Evangelisation. You might all be Evangelists, if you were baptized into the true spirit of Evangelism.

I wish to submit also that there are great constraints to the realisation of this duty. One word about that—two or three old commonplaces, and yet burning with the fire of God to this day. First of all, think of the cost of man's redemption. Once we get beneath the Cross, and see the Cross not as the gibbet of a Martyr, but as the altar of our redemption, then we see it in the light of the Spirit, and we feel what it cost God to make this Good News the Good News it is. The old preachers and the old Christians used to say—

> "It cost Christ's blood our hearts to win,
> To buy us from the power of sin,
> And make us live again."

We need to get that passion back.

Then the infinite peril of the unsaved soul. Some people have persuaded themselves nowadays that there is no hell. I venture to say that hell is a philosophical necessity, if it were not a matter of revelation. But I venture to say most emphatically, it *is* a matter of revelation. I know there are many up-to-date theologians who have persuaded themselves that

there is no devil. T. T. Lynch—he was never charged with being a narrow Evangelical—said: "Some people say there is no devil. I wonder who told them; it was the devil himself who told them." I have no doubt about that. I believe we are far too much afraid, many of us, to let men know that "it is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God." It must be a fearful thing, if sin is what it used to be, and if God is what He was—and He changeth not. You must get baptized with that solemn baptism, and then you will realise your duty of Evangelisation.

May I add this word. Perhaps never since the Evangelical Era do we number more hindrances to the Church's fulfilling this duty than to-day. There is theological influence to-day. Men do not believe the Bible. Can you wonder at it, if the Bible is what most of our Rationalistic gentry tell us it is. But, at the present day, many of us believe it from the beginning of Genesis to the end of Revelation. Beware, I beseech you, of any doctrine that will lessen your zeal for the salvation of men.

Then it requires delicate mentioning, so much so that many people now do not mention it at all, and, I venture to say, a very great hindrance to the Church's work of Evangelisation is the social duties that the Church has taken up. Ought not the Church to do social work? Yes, in the second place, but not in the first place. The fact is, too many of us have got impatient at the slow progress of the kingdom. God's method is not quick enough for some people, but God's method is the only method still. And it is as true to-day as ever, that it is not in altering men's

environment, but in altering men, that you will achieve a social revolution. Mr. Archibald Brown says that the Church is losing nowadays because it has set up so many side-shows. I believe he is quite right. It is the side-shows that are making some of us so busy that we have no time to evangelise perishing sinners. But the Holy Spirit is the abiding Paraclete, He is still in the hearts of believers, and unto us comes this grand welcome word, like bells at evening chiming—that "God giveth the Holy Spirit to those that ask Him."

If I may speak a personal word in conclusion, I sometimes feel a despair when I look round a congregation and think, "How many of these people are unconverted, and who can reach them? I cannot, but the Spirit of God can." I met an old Puritan verse the other day, and it so impressed me that I will quote it. It has a Puritan flavour, and I like anything with a Puritan flavour.

"We have listened to the preacher
He to us the truth has shown,
But we need a greater Teacher
From the Everlasting Throne.
APPLICATION is the work of
God alone."

That is the hope of the Church. I cannot apply the truth; it is God's work. But He has promised to do it, and He is ever as good as His Word.

THE CHURCH OF CHRIST

The Church's Hope—The Coming

By the Rev. Harrington C. Lees, M.A.

THE CHURCH OF CHRIST

The Church's Hope—The Coming

THERE are some words written by St. Luke long ago, when he said : " It came to pass that when Jesus was returned, the people received Him gladly, for they were all waiting for Him " (viii. 40). He did not say them about the Advent ; he said them about the people who had missed the Lord very much, even though He had only been just across the little lake and come back from Gadara to Capernaum. But I am sure it might have been said of the Advent day too ; for we and our forefathers in the Christian Church, for nearly two thousand years, have been crying, " O Lord, how long ? " " Lord, come quickly." Jesus shall return—the Church's hope, the glorious hope, the " joyous hope," as St. Paul called it when writing to Titus (ii. 13). Remember that the Advent is not intended as a terror, but a light that gladdens the heart, and a song that shall make music in life ; it is intended to turn the minor into the major key, and to make us say, " It will not be long before we get out of the cloud into the sunshine."

The *hope*. Has not the Church sore need of it to-day ? In the dark days just before the Reformation, there was a handful of people who had tried all means for bringing light into God's Church, in deep

darkness as she was then; but they all failed with merely human methods. Then they betook them to waiting upon God, and called themselves the "Expectants"; nor was it long before God had put forth His arm, and the light had indeed dawned, and their expectations had been fulfilled. In these days surely there is a need that we should constitute ourselves the "Expectants." The churches are racking their brains and holding their conferences to find some new method of bringing light. The light is going to come when the Lord comes. Surely this is a time for us not only to evangelise and serve, but also to wait and pray. In days when there is not only a massing of unbelief outside the churches, but a massing of most dismaying and alarming unbelief inside the churches,—in days when there is a spiritual frost that is tending to chill not only with the grip of Sacerdotalism, but the clamour of a deadened democracy for brilliant but unspiritual worship!—in these days surely there is the call that we should look up to Him and say, "O Lord, Thou art our hope, and to Thee we look."

Those who live within the Arctic Circle have a curious experience every year. There comes a day when the sun rises and shines for but a short time. Above the horizon it comes, and then goes down, and then for six long months there is no more sunshine, but one continuous long night—the gleaming stars, and every now and then the relief of the aurora, but no day. Then, by and by, there begins to shine a faint flush, which lengthens, until at last the six months' night is ended, and once more the sun shines, till ultimately a period is reached when there is a

day on which there is no sunset, and for a whole day the sun circles round the sky without a setting. It has been so with the Christian Church. There was a period when upon a dark world the Sun of Righteousness arose, and in the afterglow of that short day the Church has been living ever since. But that Sun, from one point of view, set nearly two thousand years ago, and we have had a long night. The Church has tried to be the moon, and reflect the light, but she has been waning more than she has waxed. There has been a flush of aurora when revival has come, but there has been, on the whole, a long night. And we are looking for the dawn of a day that shall know no sunset, when Jesus Christ shall come back to live on the earth for a thousand years, and His servants shall serve Him. That is what we are looking for.

He came to redeem. Let us not forget that; it is the very fountain of all our life and work. And, remember, all the Old Testament light that shines through that beautiful New Testament word Redemption is the New Testament equivalent of an Old Testament word, and it stands for three definite things in our Bible. It stands for the redress of all wrongs. It is the word used for the "avenger of blood." Then, further, it is the word used for the "rescuing of the prisoner." A brother could buy back his brother out of slavery and set him free, paying the price. It is also the word used for recognising a relationship, and bringing into close touch. Boaz recognised Ruth as a relative, and afterwards brought her into a new relationship, making her his wife. That is like Jesus Christ; and it is the Old Testament

light on the subject. Think of it, our nearest relation is Jesus Christ! He came to rescue prisoners, to redress wrongs, to bring us into near relationship to Himself. And this is the Jesus who is coming back again. "This same Jesus shall so come." There are some who are afraid, and shudder a little as we talk about His coming, as though it might be to-night. You would not be afraid of meeting your nearest relation. It is He who is coming back. What makes you afraid? This, perhaps; that you are not a son of God by faith, or that you are not living the life of a child of God, and therefore, though you have come to Him for pardon you are afraid of Jesus Christ. Come, and in His pardon and power, prepare for the Advent Day. He came to redeem, He is going to return. How we thank God for that, —a personal return!

I deplore most deeply the theory that the Advent of Our Lord Jesus Christ is merely a kind of visitation, when He comes to a soul here and a soul there. Is that all that you and I have been taught to look for in the New Testament, which is our one warrant for an Advent hope at all? The kingdom of heaven is like unto "a nobleman who went into a far country to receive for himself a kingdom, and to return" (Luke xix. 12). Is not that what we are looking for? Is the Church's hope merely a junction between one soul and the one Saviour? Is it not Jesus Christ Himself who is the Church's hope? I fear, it was just because unbelief came upon the Church that she began to abandon that hope. She was afraid because the time seemed long. Peter said there would arise people saying, "Where is the promise

of His coming, for since the fathers fell asleep, all things continue as they were from the beginning of the creation ? " (2 Pet. iii. 4). They said it about Noah and the Flood. For 120 years it was foretold that the Flood was coming, and men did not believe it, yet the Flood came. I could show you how some of our greatest geologists to-day are telling us about the debris of a great Flood which they used to scorn the very notion of. I have books on geology testifying that a great Flood in the human period is an ascertained scientific fact. Just so surely as that came,—just so surely as Jesus Christ was prophesied for hundreds of years, and came,—just so surely is He going to come again.

He is going to return. We cannot tell when. We cannot hear the ticking of God's clock, but when the finger reaches the hour, be sure it will strike. And, as there are in some clocks indications, to those who listen, that the striking of the hour is already near, so, to those whose ears are open to hear, there may be heard the sounds that may tell of the coming Lord. If one had time one might show, in the great national conditions of the world, in the building of great navies, in the prevailing spirit of militarism, in the great craze (may I call it ?) for educationalism, in the great spread of intercommunication,—facts which Our Lord told us to look for,—in the re-nationalisation of God's ancient people, in their re-settlement in the land,—signs which He gave us as welcome warning-posts—in the very condition of our Churches, in their missionary activities, in their greater use of God's handmaidens, in their looking and praying and seeking for the revival, in their very false doctrines

and heresies so clearly outlined in the Pastoral Epistles —these are indications regarding which Our Lord Himself said, "When ye see these things know that He is near, even at the doors" (Matt. xxiv. 33). He is going to return.

He is going to receive, also. "If I go away, I will come again and receive you unto Myself" (John xiv. 3). We often misunderstand God's terms. We have got into the way of talking about the end of the world and the judgment day as though they were the same thing as the Advent. It is a theological inaccuracy. What the Christian is looking for is this: "I will come again and will receive you unto Myself." "We who are alive and remain," as well as the dead in Christ, "shall be caught up together with Him in the air, and so shall we be for ever with the Lord" (1 Thess. iv. 17). He used the same word for "receive" in St. John xiv., as in St. Matthew xxiv. 40, 41. "One shall be taken, and the other left." That sounds very different from "the judgment day," and it sounds different for the simple reason that it *is* different! You and I are looking, if we are His, to being caught up to be with Him for ever. That union is for us the goal of our hopes. As you may see sometimes a man go away to Australia, and there labour hard, while at home some maiden, earnestly expects and prays for the day when he shall come back and take her to be his, for life—so you and I look for Him who is our nearest and dearest. We get faint as we watch, and hope deferred makes our heart sick sometimes; but we know that on the day when He comes back the Bridegroom will take his Bride to be with Him for ever—received unto Himself.

He is not only going to receive ; He is going to reject. "One shall be taken, and the other *left.*"

Left. How awful if the day should come, and some soul shall be left, just because it was not in "Christ." That is the qualification in 1 Thess. iv. Nothing is said of those out of Christ. "The dead in Christ shall rise first." "We (Christians) which are alive shall be caught up." The rest are to be rejected. What if the Lord should come back to claim all those who are His, and He should leave behind in a Christless, Christianless world, to a period of terrible trial or suffering, *me or you* ?

But, further, *He is going to reckon.* "After a long time the lord of those servants cometh and reckoneth with them" (Matt. xxv. 19). There is a great day coming when the Lord intends to go into the accounts with His people, when He is going to see just what their lives have been. This is, for any evangelical view of justification by faith, a logical sequence, a philosophical necessity. It is thrown in our teeth by those who do not hold *justification by faith,* that we believe it does not matter what a man's life is, so long as he believes in Jesus Christ. But remember Jesus Christ does not warrant that view, nor do we hold it. Though you are a Christian, whatever you do after you are a Christian is going to be taken into account. You are not coming into condemnation if you are in Him, but you are going to come before Him for scrutiny, you are going to give an account to Him, and on that ground your position in heaven is going to be settled, though your actual entrance is solely through Christ. There is to be a real audit of your actions. St. Paul says to the Corinthians that on

that day some people are only to be saved barely, and their works are going to be burned up. Is there no incentive here for a life of service and holiness and real abandonment of sin? It is a caricature of the gospel to say that, because we are saved by faith, we may go and live as we like. It is not what *we* like, it is what *God* likes. There is going to be a reckoning day for the Christian, and a reward according to that reckoning.

And again, *He is going to reward.* It is not to be only a fault-finding in that day. "Then shall every man have (his due) praise of God," says St. Paul (1 Cor. iv. 5). When Christ comes He is going to give us just that crown which we have won. There are four great crowns that every Christian may win. They are all different, and are discriminated most carefully — the crown of *righteousness* for faithful soldiers, the crown of *life* for patient endurance, the crown of *joy* for soul-winning, the crown of *glory* for pastoral work. "Behold I come quickly, and My reward is with Me, to render to each man according as his work is" (Rev. xx. 12). Have any of you tried to qualify for these crowns? A crown is not salvation. Salvation is a gift, a crown is a prize won.

Lastly, *He is going to reign*—a real definite kingship of Jesus Christ in this earth—with you and me associated with Him in that blessed work. It is a reign in which He is not only going to be called Lord, but in which He is going to be Lord; a reign in which social regeneration is going to be synonymous with spiritual regeneration; a reign in which sanitation is going to coexist with a cleansed heart and life; a

reign in which the fields shall be ploughed and the fruits shall be garnered not merely for the good of men, but for the praise and glory of God ; a reign in which our local government shall not merely be administrative but evangelistic ; a reign in which the navies of the world shall be for commerce and communication, and in which our armies shall be needed no more ; a reign during which " the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the Lord, as the waters cover the sea " (Isa. xi. 9). That is the day to which we look. There is in the city of Orwigsburg a wonderful clock, which contains an ingenious device by which, on every Sabbath morning, the door of that clock opens, and there comes forth the figure of a man holding an open book in his hand ; on the book there are these words : " When I am to appear ye know, but when the Son of Man shall appear, ye know not. Be ye therefore ready." God grant we may all be ready in the day when the Church's hope is turned into realisation, and her prayer finds its long-delayed and abundant answer.

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